Journal of the Police History Society

Number 20 2005

COVER PICTURE:
PC George Woolens, Metropolitan Police, *c*.1865

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The *Police History Society publishes the Journal of the Police History Society annually.* Contributions are welcome from both members and non-members. Please send material double-spaced and typed on A4 paper with details of any discs you can supply to save retyping. *The Editor produces the Journal on Word for Windows in Microsoft Office 2000.*

Please send all contributions to the PHS Journal to:

Mr Chris Forester
Pinewell Heights
Tilford Road
Hindhead
Surrey GU26 6SQ

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Editorial

Riots figure prominently in this edition. Geoff Floy reports the infamous riot after the presence of that arch fraud David Lloyd George in Birmingham. Like many politicians he had a flawed vision of his own popularity and ability to talk his way out of trouble. On this occasion he nearly didn't.

Len Woodley, too, comes up with another tale of rural unrest and tells the story of a riot at Chipping Norton. As regular readers may have noticed, no police magazine I produce is missing a piece on Mounted Policemen and this is no exception. From the files of Bedfordshire's 1985 *Blue Lamp* magazine Mick Madigan traces the progress of the old Luton Borough force. Roy Ingleton also obliges us with experiences of traffic on wartime roads. Overseas forces are catered for with Richard Ford's exploits in Nyasaland in 1960; following this is a tale of murder and terrorism in Palestine, no change there then. Paul Dew of the Mets civil staff tells us of some gallant Victorian policemen, some of whom even were rewarded for their courage. A moneyed theme continues with an account by Richard Hardy of when Taunton Police issued token coinage to the humbler populace of the county. Now there's a scheme that could have been persevered with! Peter Rowe just beat the deadline with A Compleate Historie of Ye Police and lastly is our cover PC George Woolens of the Mets, probably taken around 1864/65.

Please keep the articles coming.

CHRIS FORESTER

LUTON BOROUGH

Bedfordshire Mounted Policemen

By Mick Madigan

Following the Luton Town versus Manchester United football match in April, a local paper, *The Herald*, published a photograph showing members of the City of London Mounted Branch outside the ground, and the comment from a senior police officer describing the mounted operation as an 'historic event'.

Perhaps not so historic as he thought, for many of the older generation of Lutonians will recall seeing Luton's own mounted men on duty in the town.

It all started in 1909, when Captain H. D. Terry, the HMI, inspected the Luton Borough Force on April 28 and 'expressed an opinion that the Police should possess horses and equipment to mount four men, these horses being trained to mingle amongst crowds of people'.

Cavalry experience

Decisions in those days were not the prolonged year or two exercises that they are today. Twelve days later, on May 10, the Watch Committee resolved 'that the Chief Constable be authorised to purchase the necessary equipment, and as a tentative measure the horse at the Fire Station be mounted by a police officer, and ridden through the principal streets of the town on Saturday evenings'.

The Chief Constable, Mr David Teale, did not waste any time. He already had two officers who had served in the cavalry prior to joining the Police Service. One was PC Albert Head who had served in the 5th Lancers throughout and after the Boer War, and another was PC William Byron who had served in the 2nd Life Guards before joining the Police Force in 1907.

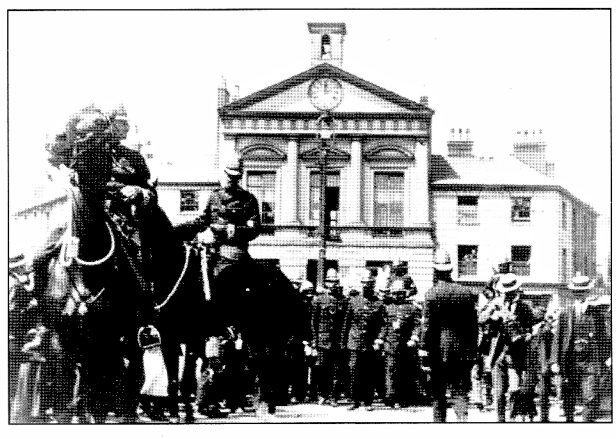
At the next Watch Committee meeting on June 14, 1909, the Chief Constable presented two recruits for appointment. They were Joseph Barley and Percy Cooper, both serving in the Life Guards, and they were promptly appointed 3rd Class Probationer Constables at a weekly wage of £1 4s 6d each. At the same meeting Mutual Aid to the County Force was discussed, and among the expenses to be charged to the county if aid was required was the cost of horses – to be at the actual cost of hire.

Emergency

At the completion of that same Watch Committee meeting the Chief Constable reported 'that with the two men appointed at this meeting, he had four well-trained Cavalry men in the Force, which in his opinion was sufficient for any emergency arising in the town'.

A later meeting of the General Purposes and Fire Brigades Committee records that the Chief Constable, who incidentally was also the Captain of the Fire Brigade, should be allowed the use of the Fire Brigade horse for training purposes at a rate of five shillings per evening.

A photograph dated 1911 shows mounted men among other straw-helmeted policemen escorting The Hon Mr



Cecil Harmsworth, MP, the successful by-election winner, through George Street.

That same year the four original mounted men were parading on horseback for the annual Force Inspection. PC Barley resigned that year and his place was taken by PC Alf Goss who was one of the four on mounted parade for the 1913 Force Inspection.

The onset of World War I hit the Mounted Section immediately, for in September, 1914, the Chief Constable was reporting to the Watch Committee that three of his four mounted men had been called up for military service.

A discussion at the same meeting authorised the Chief Constable, if and when necessary, to hire horses from the George Hotel. PC Head was left to keep the 'mounted flag' flying, and he is recorded as being on mounted duty on the occasion of a visit to the town on October 29, 1916, by Lord French who was making an Army recruiting visit.

David Teale, the Chief Constable who had established the Mounted Section, died in December, 1916, and a report in *The Police Review* and Parade Gossip of December 22, 1916, referring to his funeral, notes: 'A pathetic figure in the procession was Polly, the late Chief's riding horse, for which he had a great affection. She was led by her groom PC Head. Her harness was interlaced with white ribbon, and in the stirrups were the reversed riding boots of the late Chief.' I can find no reference to the mounted men during the time that Charles Griffin was the Chief Constable, and nothing in writing to show that they were used during the Peace Riot, and the burning of the Town Hall in July, 1919, but one lady has described to me seeing a large crowd besieging the old Police Station in Dunstable Place, the gates being thrown open and the mounted men charging out and quickly clearing the street.

After the War, and on the appointment of Albert Scott as Chief, the mounted men were again used for ceremonial, and crowd control duties, when large gatherings of the public were taking place.

The photograph below shows the Mounted Section of 1921 on parade, almost certainly for the Force Inspection that year on June 1. The inspection was held in the grounds of the Luton Modern School at Park Square. The horses that year had been hired from and prepared for inspection at Powdrill's stables, but it is not clear where the photograph was taken.

The riders are, from left to right, PC A. Head, PC William Causebrook who served during the War in the Royal Horse Guards, PC A. Goss who had been recalled to the Royal Horse Artillery in 1914 and PC James Madigan who had served in the Military Mounted Police.

There is a further reference in 1928 to PCs Head and Madigan being on mounted duty for a charity fete in Wardown Park. They led the procession through the town from Manor Road to the Park, and then one had to remain on patrol in Old Bedford Road, whilst the other patrolled the park itself.

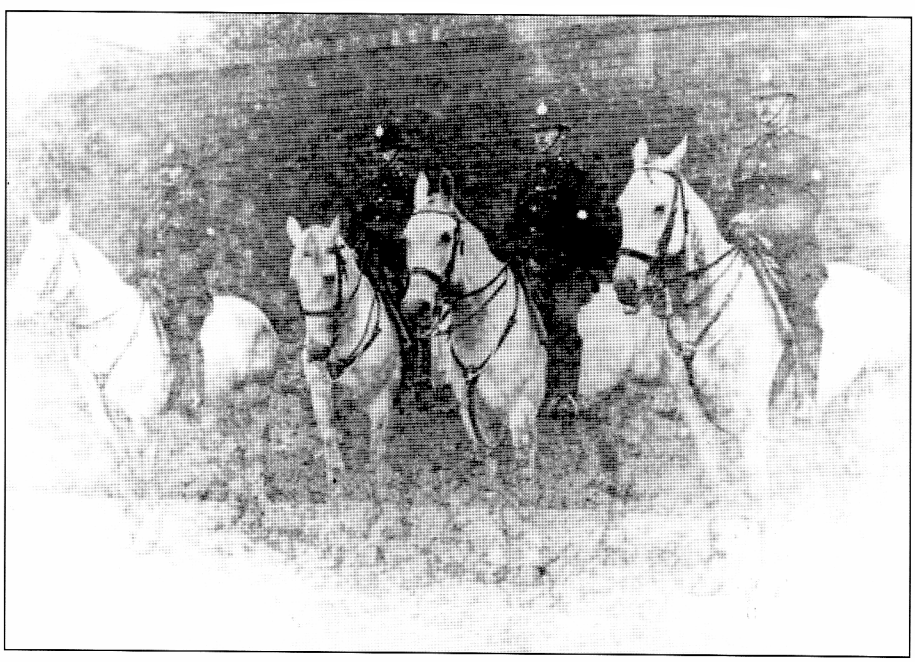
There are many gaps in the story. The Force did not purchase any horses, but hired them as and when required. It certainly owned the saddlery and other equipment, and this was still in the Police stores at Luton in the 1950s.

The End of the Story

Use of mounted men seems to have ceased either just before, or with the appointment in 1937 of Mr George Scott as Chief Constable. Use of the well-known straw helmets ceased at the same time — but that is another story.

If any reader can throw any light on what became of the saddlery, or can in fact add any information of any sort about the Luton Borough Force pre-1947, 1 hope that they will pass it on to me.

This feature on mounted policemen in Bedfordshire was compiled by Mick Madigan, Scenes of Crime Officer at Luton in 1985. It was originally featured in the Blue Lamp *the Force magazine of Bedfordshire Constabulary. Any further information on this subject can be transmitted to the editor.*



Hats off for McHardy

A tale of headgear, protocol and paper-chasing in a Highland Constabulary

By Dave Conner

Alexander McHardy served as Chief Constable of the Inverness-shire Constabulary from 1882 until his death in 1911. He took charge of the Force at a particularly turbulent time, when there was a great deal of 'lawlessness or disturbances' as contemporaries termed it. Crofters (tenant farmers) were agitating for a reform of the laws in respect of land use and ownership, seeking fairer rents and better rights of tenure. They were not afraid to stand up and be counted, which saw civil disobedience and damage to persons and property, and resulted in the Authorities mounting expeditions of massed Police from throughout Scotland – and also the might of the military – to keep the peace, to allow the enforcement of civil law procedures and to deal with those who sought to deforce the sheriff officers. For all that, little things could and did occupy the minds of the Force's senior management, such as the story which unfolded during reading of a Copy Correspondence book of the time. It was used by Peter Mackenzie, who was the Police Inspector at Lochmaddy in the Western Isles. He was in charge of the Long Island Division, comprising all the Islands of the Outer Hebrides (except for Lewis, which was within Ross-shire). First, however, it is worth learning something of the background Chief Constable Alexander McHardy. Third son of a gamekeeper on one of the sporting estates in Aberdeenshire, he was born near Braemar (not from Balmoral Castle) on 9 June 1839. He came to Inverness-shire at the age of only 43 years, from his post of Chief Constable of the County of Sutherland, which he had 16 years and four months. At the time of his appointment to Dornoch he would have been just a lad of 25 years of age. Before his appointment in Sutherland, McHardy had been in the Fife Constabulary for 5 years, and before that he had served in the Sutherland force for almost 2 years. His Police career had begun in the Aberdeen Rural Constabulary where he served for 16 months, which he recorded 'having joined the latter force on 22nd March 1858 at age of $19^{3}/_{12}$ years'. It would appear young McHardy had made a rapid ascent through the Police rank structure. It is likely that his moves between forces were on promotion each time, although this cannot now be confirmed. His application for the post of Chief Constable of the County of Inverness being successful, he made what was to be his final transfer in December 1882, still only 43 years of age. Whether his career ambitions were satisfied by this move is unknown, but in any event he was to remain in Inverness until his death from influenza in 1911 at the age of 71.

The County Force's Headquarters was within part of the Castle in Inverness, surely the most picturesque Police Station anywhere in the Kingdom, and which only ceased to be a Police Office during 1997.

Within the County of Inverness there was also one municipal Police Force, that of Inverness Burgh, which had 14 men. McHardy, whose responsibilities covered the whole of the County outwith the burgh of Inverness, would have had 29 men under him, comprising one Superintendent (also Deputy Chief Constable and in charge of the Inverness Landward Area, including Strathspey); three Inspectors (based at Fort William, Lochmaddy and Portree); two Sergeants and 23 Constables.

McHardy went on to hold the Inverness-shire post for no less than 28 years, which would be the longest reign of any Chief Officer in the Inverness-shire Constabulary. In its 128-year existence, the County Force had only eight Chief Officers. McHardy's Police career spanned an amazing 53 years – almost 45 years of them as a Chief Constable.

It is also fascinating that his brother Charles had worked his way up through the ranks in the Dunbartonshire Constabulary, to become Chief Constable of that force in 1884, a post he held for 30 years till he – like his brother Alexander – died in harness.

Mr McHardy found himself catapulted into the cauldron which was the County of Inverness in the 1880s, with crofter unrest rife throughout the County and especially in the Islands. Unlike many Chief Officers of the time who were retired military men, McHardy was a career policeman. Not for him a cushy number, sitting in Inverness Castle with his feet up. He had to get out and about around the County, as well as dealing with all the information and reports coming in from the Stations around Inverness and his three Divisions forthwith.

In those days there were three forms of communication, wire (telegram), correspondence and personal visits. The Force made full use of all of these, and the volume of correspondence was massive. What a boon the telephone – and a photocopier and fax, or even a typewriter – would have been to McHardy and his men as they devoured rain forests.

Inspector Mackenzie at Lochmaddy was obviously under instruction to be most meticulous and presumably had little time for patrol, what with the volume of mail he sent to his Chief and to his men in the 12 stations dotted around the Islands of Harris, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist, and Barra.

The story of the hats originates in the author's quest to establish what kind of headgear the Inverness-shire Force wore last century. He strongly suspected that 'bobby helmets' were worn, in common with other Forces in the Highlands, but no photograph had turned up in his researches to confirm this. While some helmet badges worn by other Highland Forces have turned up, usually bearing the name of the Force, no such badge bearing the word 'Inverness-shire' had come to light.

So it was that the author, having found the Correspondence Book, began to read through it in the hope of finding mention of helmets or hats. What resulted was a fascinating little saga of petty matters, confusion and a breakdown in communication. Sadly only one side of the story has survived. One wishes that the correspondence emanating from Mr McHardy – who

was obviously a hard but fair man – had also survived.

In those bygone days uniform was supplied in instalments, half one year and half the next. It comes as something of a shock therefore to learn that within a month the officers in the Outer Hebrides should get both a helmet and a cap.

On 7 August 1884, Inspector Mackenzie reported to Mr McHardy: *I beg to acknowledge receipt of the 11 helmets mentioned in your Memo of the 30th ultimo; also ornament for my own. I will attend to your instructions regarding them.*

Two days later, he wrote to the senior Constable on the Isle of Barra: *I am sending you and P.C. Macdonald a helmet each – both in one parcel addressed to you by the 'Dunara Castle' on Monday next.*

It is requested that the ornaments will be transferred from the old helmets to the new ones at once. They are to be placed 1 inch above the chain in the front of the helmets. You will require to use a piece twine in fixing the ornaments. Be particular in fixing the ornaments, that the lower edge of the wreath will be 1 1/4 inch above the chain.

Own receipt and state whether the helmets fit.

Note: It is requested that the new helmets will be worn without any delay after being received.

Less than six weeks later, on 18 September 1884, the somewhat surprised Inspector received another package from Headquarters in Inverness. He wrote the following memorandum to the Chief Constable: *I beg to acknowledge receipt yesterday of 13 uniform caps, one for myself and one for each of the men of this Division. I will keep them until I receive instructions to deliver them to the men as requested.*

My cap is too large for me, so much so that when it is packed up with paper it will not stop on my head. 22 1/4 inch is large enough for me. My helmet is nearly as large for me as the cap.

The next time the subject is mentioned was on 23 December 1884, when Father Christmas seemed to be distributing uniform along with the more usual items.

Mackenzie wrote to the Chief Constable that: *I beg to acknowledge receipt tonight of your Memo of the 20th current, and also the two pairs of trousers mentioned therein. I will send the trousers to P.C.s Macmaster, Barra, and Tait, Trimsgarry, without delay.*

Obviously these items had not been forthcoming when the rest of the division were kitted out.

Nonetheless it would appear that issue and use were not synonymous. So Inspector Mackenzie felt obliged to check with Mr McHardy: *Please inform me whether will I send their trousers to the other men now. I have no doubt they would like to get them. I was requested not to give them to the men until I received instructions to do so.*

Presumably the idea was that the new items were to be kept in pristine condition for any special duties. There was always a danger that the men would start using the new clothing at once and thus liable to get the kit dirty or damaged.

This could result in having to parade in older, perhaps scruffy, clothing on occasions of special importance, such as when the Government Inspector came to call. That was liable to get the Force a bad report – and upset the Chief Constable too.

It is likely that this was the first time that caps had been issued to the force, so the men would have been keen to try them out. Helmets were not the best type of headgear – especially in the wild and windy weather of the west. Whether the new caps were peaked ones or the kepi (pill-box) type is unclear. Certainly both types were worn in later years.

Lest he might do the wrong thing, Mackenzie had kept the caps in his office until he could check with his boss that it was in order to distribute them. He notified McHardy accordingly: *I have been giving the caps to the men as chances occurred, since the 29th ultimo, when you told me here I might do so.*

Inspector Mackenzie, for one, had obviously tried a cap on, and was disappointed, and he told the Chief Constable so in no uncertain terms: *My own cap is so large to me that it cannot be made suitable by packing up with papers or so. I would be obliged by getting it exchanged for a suitable one.*

Surely he would have tried his cap on as soon as it arrived? So why did he not tell McHardy when he visited North Uist in November – or better still he could have told him in advance so that the Chief Constable could send him one then (or even bring it out with him)?

We now have almost six months of inactivity on the subject which – on reflection – should perhaps have sounded an alarm bell with Mackenzie. Then he received a message from P.C. Ross at Barra on 6 May 1885: *I beg to draw your attention to the fact that I have never received a uniform cap. I wrote to the Chief Constable some time ago informing him that the only uniform head dress in my possession was a helmet, but I have never got any reply.*

I shall feel obliged if you can do anything towards getting me a cap soon.

Inspector Mackenzie wrote to the Chief Constable on the subject on 11 May, quoting P.C. Ross's plea and commenting: *I remember when P.C. Ross's application for a cap went through. I wrote then regarding my own, which I have never been able to wear, being much too large for me. I wrote once or twice before then about it, but it may have escaped your notice.*

If you allow me I shall willingly return the cap and pay the expense of altering it rather than want the use of it.

That was certainly a plea from the heart, and it seems as though the Inspector was rather cheesed off at still having to wear a helmet when his men were obviously proudly sporting their caps. It was definitely a matter of some concern to the Inspector if he was prepared to pay out of his own pocket, but that gesture – well intended as it was – was likely to annoy the Chief.

Inspector Mackenzie then admitted that there had obviously been an administrative hitch on his part: *There is one uniform cap here but I know it is much too large for P.C. Ross.*

Six weeks later there was still no reply from the Chief Constable on the matter and that tells its own story. Mackenzie seems to have realised that – or was it that he did not wish to look stupid by being asked why he alone (and P.C. Ross) were the only ones still wearing helmets – when he sent out instructions to the men under his command on 29 June about the impending visit of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland: *Have on your new uniform, with helmet and waist belt, and have white gloves neatly under the belt on the left side. Have your baton and handcuffs on you and carry your Daily Occurrences Book in the left hand. Hair*

to be properly trimmed and everything in good order.

A week later came more uniform which he acknowledged to the Chief Constable: *I beg to acknowledge receipt last night per parcels post of two parcels, one containing a uniform tunic and a pair of trousers, and the other a uniform cap.*

There was however a nagging doubt in his mind on the subject of hats: *I think it right to state that I requested all the men to wear their helmets at the Inspection. As to myself, I am not sure whether I should do so or not.*

It appears as though he saw an opportunity here to distinguish himself from his subordinates, as his new jacket obviously impressed him. Inspectors' tunics of the time were very fancy, and really stood out from the plain serge tunics of the Sergeants and Constables.

I see the cap corresponds with the new uniform more than the helmet on account of the braid etc. Please let me know as to this.

It looks as though the obviously curt response he received six days later came as a complete surprise to him. No boss likes to be told off, as Inspector Mackenzie certainly was: *Sir, I beg to acknowledge receipt today of my report of the 4th current regarding police uniform, returned with your note referring to wearing of uniform caps.*

I beg to explain that when you had been here along with Sheriff Ivory on the 29th of November last, I asked would I deliver the caps to the men, and you told me then that I might do so, but there was nothing said as to when they would wear them. I took it for granted that the caps were to be worn after that date, and I gave them to the men as opportunities occurred.

There followed some swift back-tracking on the Inspector's part: *Though the men had the caps they did not wear them on all occasions; when here on any business they always wore their helmets. I regret much that such a mistake as this should have happened. If it had occurred to me in the least that they were not to wear the caps I would have told them when the caps were being given not to wear them until further orders, and that I hope you do not think that I gave the men authority to wear them except under the impression that you intended them to do so.*

But still there seemed some element of doubt in poor Mackenzie's mind: *If you wish the wearing of the caps to be discontinued please let me know, so that I may inform the men.*

The Correspondence Book runs through to the end of October 1885 but there is no further mention of the vexed question of wearing caps. Undoubtedly the directive did finally come to wear them but it is not known when – but probably around the following summer.

The Chief Constable visited the Long Island Division on 7 September 1885. It is very likely that the matter was thrashed out face-to-face then. It is strange that there is not even a note from Mackenzie to his men. If McHardy had given a verbal direction, one would have expected it to have been repeated down the ranks.

It is possible that Mr McHardy – not long in the job – did not like to make many changes too soon, and wished to wait till the time was right; perhaps similar to recent events in the Northern Constabulary when there was a great deal of heart-searching by senior management before allowing officers to go out on the street with the new baton and handcuffs.

Again this was a major change in the look of the police, and there was concern as to public reaction. In fact, however, it was simply history repeating itself, as about a century before police officers had routinely worn tunics with no side pockets (or baton pocket) and thus carried their accoutrements slung from their wide belts.

It is considered likely that the caps did get taken into use during 1886. The reason is that Mackenzie's opposite number in the Skye Division, Inspector Malcolm Macdonald, left the force in 1887 to take up the post of Chief Constable of Sutherland. That force subsequently adopted collar insignia and hat-badges (kepi and cap) virtually identical to those in Inverness-shire, and one must assume that Macdonald took the ideas with him, having seen them all in use in Inverness-shire.

As for Inspector Mackenzie – what about him? Well, Peter Mackenzie was a native of the Parish of Urquhart – more commonly known nowadays as Glenurquhart, the area around Drumnadrochit on the west side of Loch Ness. He had joined the Inverness-shire force on 16 October 1858 at the age of 22, having previously worked as a labourer. His first posting was to Arisaig (near Mallaig) on the west coast of the mainland in Lochaber.

He must have made a good impression with Mr McHardy's predecessor as young Mackenzie was promoted to Sergeant on 15 November 1862 at the age of 26 years, and was transferred to Beauly. In August 1871 he moved again, this time to Kingussie where he took charge of the whole of the Spey Valley.

Again he must have done well because he was further promoted, to Inspector in charge of Long Island Division (Outer Hebrides) at Lochmaddy on 28 March 1875. His period at Lochmaddy was no less than 12 years.

When Malcolm Macdonald, his opposite number at Portree, was successful in obtaining the post of Chief Constable in Sutherland, Mr McHardy decided to move Inspector Mackenzie back across the Minch as Macdonald's successor.

So in June 1897, Peter Mackenzie took charge of the Skye Division. His stay in Portree was brief, however. On 6 November 1889 Mackenzie decided to resign from the Service and to go overseas. At the age of 53, he was still a comparatively young man, but why he went and where we do not know. The REASON FOR LEAVING section of his Personal Record simply records "Resigned and went abroad".

He had completed 31 years service, and had he remained another year he would have been entitled to a pension. At the time of his leaving, however, the new police (Scotland) Act had not yet gone through Parliament, and there was therefore then no provision for rewarding long service.

Because he left before the new pension provision took effect, there are no details of wife and family on his Record. It is known that while serving as Inspector in Lochmaddy, he had at least one daughter residing with him. She must have then been in her late teens at least, as she was in the habit of taking messages to other officers for him in her travels around the island.

So we do not know the ultimate fate of Peter Mackenzie. Whether he went to America or Canada, Australia or New Zealand, South Africa or another of Britain's colonies, the fact remains that he would have seen police officers in these places resplendent in their

helmets. That would have undoubtedly brought back happy memories – or perhaps made him cringe at the thought of the hassle there had been over the headgear which arrived on the 'Dunara Castle' in August 1884.

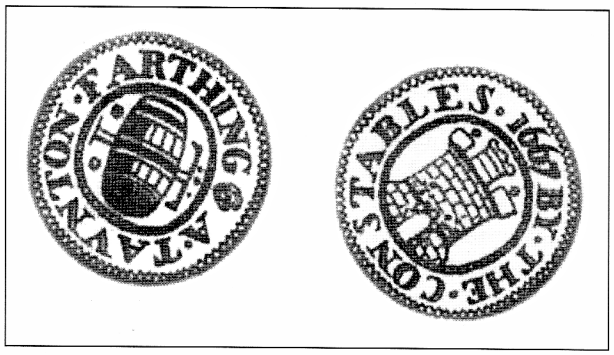
So there we are. A minor matter, but fascinating all the same; all the more remarkable for the fact that the police of the time had much more to bother about. The amount of time taken up in such a trivial matter is considerable – but it has made the Force Historian a happy man. He is still not certain of what badge or 'ornament' the Inverness-shire Constabulary wore on their helmets, but he is surely getting closer!

Police Money

By Richard H. Hardy

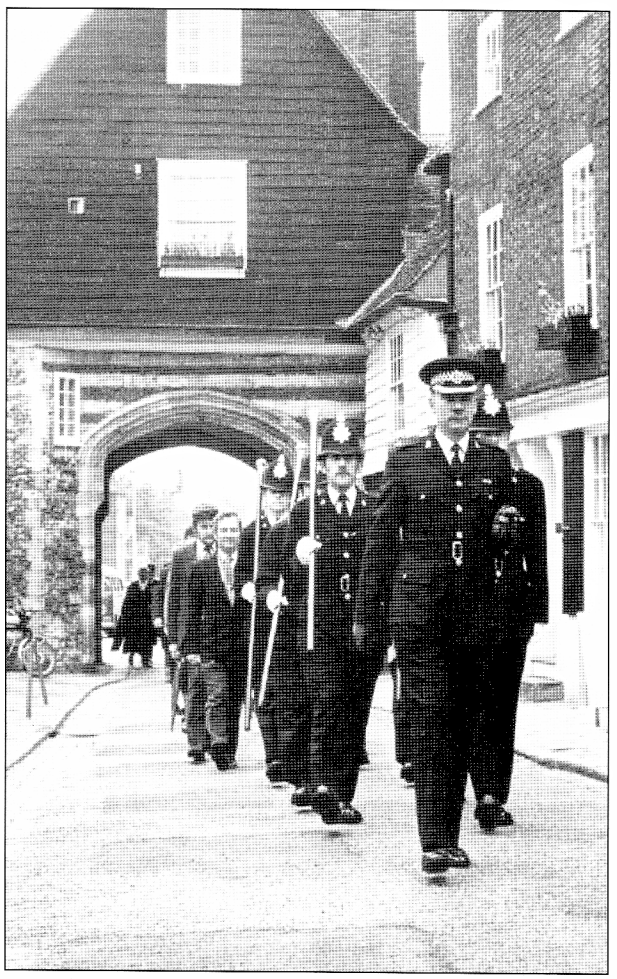
Not a lot of people know that in 1667 two police constables, Stephen Savage and Henry Crosse, were responsible for the issue of token coinage in Taunton, Somerset. Collecting and studying token coinage has been my main hobby for 35 years and after researching this type of coinage, I believe the Taunton tokens are the only coins ever issued by the police. In the old days the government did not consider the needs of the more humble people and were content to issue coins of one penny upwards. A pint of ale (a necessity as the water was too foul to drink) cost a farthing in the 17th Century and if you presented a silver penny there were no halfpennies or farthings to give change. Hence token coinage was issued by mainly shop proprietors and inn keepers. These were usually minted in London and contained the name or sign of the premises, the year of issue and the initials of the issuer and his wife. There were for instance some 550 different tokens used in Kent alone. It has taken me 35 years to collect 150 of these items so there are not many in circulation.

The two constables of Taunton were not lowly watch keepers as illustrated in history books with a lantern walking the streets of towns but were of high status 'sitting on the bench at borough courts as assessors to the clerk of the castle'. Stephen Savage paid tax for a property with three hearths in East Street, Taunton and Henry Crosse for one with five hearths in Fore Street. These were two of the principal streets in the town and the number of hearths indicated that they were relatively prosperous.



As shown in the illustration the obverse is a rebus (a play on symbols and letters) showing the letter T (in greek pronounced TAU) and the barrel known in those days as a TUN, i.e. Tauntun, also the legend TAUNTON FARTHING. The reverse BY THE CONSTABLES 1667 and a castle.

These tokens are slightly larger and heavier than the normal farthing token of the time showing their importance for being issued by the local authority rather than a shop keeper. They circulated widely in the county and were also found in Devonshire.



The author leading the Court of the Admiral of the River Medway in Rochester.

The author served as a police officer in Kent for 30 years and latterly as a civilian employee at the Police HQ for eight years. Having made a collection of these coins he is always interested to find different varieties. Some of the more common ones are for sale, please contact 01303 262693 if interested.

Major Farran – a Murky Tale of Murder and Terrorism

By Robert Bartlett MA (Cantab), Joint Founder Police History Society

An account of the murder of Rex Francis Farran, 26, who was killed on the 3rd May 1948 when he opened a parcel bomb addressed to his brother Roy at their home, Histons Hill, Codsall, Staffordshire

What follows are extracts from *The Times* newspaper progressively telling the story of a possible murder in Palestine that became linked through one of the most decorated men of the Second World War to a murder by parcel bomb in Staffordshire. Roy Farran is an amazing man, who when very young commanded a squadron of the SAS and was awarded the DSO and MC with three bars. When the war ended, reluctantly, he was posted to Palestine where he worked in an undercover military unit charged with countering the terrorists known as the Stern Gang. Farran became caught up in the disappearance of a Jewish youth Alexander Rubowitz, and was charged with his murder but found not guilty and discharged. After the war Major Farran moved to Canada where he was still living in recent times. In 2004 on BBC TV a past member of the Stern Gang admitted to the murder of Major Farran's brother but it is not known if Staffordshire police are reopening their murder file.

The Times 21st June 1947

"BRITISH OFFICER DISAPPEARS. ESCAPE FROM JERUSALEM BARRACKS"

Jerusalem June 20

Major R.A. Farran a regular army officer serving with the Palestine Police, who was brought back from Syria under escort to await inquiries into the disappearance of a Jewish youth in Jerusalem last month, escaped from close arrest in custody last night and has not been seen since. Major Farran was in Allenby Military Barracks and was to be handed over to the custody of the Army today in order that a charge might be preferred against him in a military court. ... Might be in Transjordan.

Major Farran was in the Special Air Service during the war and so distinguished himself behind enemy lines that he was awarded the DSO and the MC and three bars. He is 26.

An ID parade was held on Wednesday night, but none of the witnesses who claimed to have seen the Jewish youth taken away in a car in the centre of Jerusalem identified Major Farran. The youth named Alexander Rubowitz is presumed to be dead.

The Times 25th June 1947

The police have informed the relatives of Alexander Rubowitz, who has been missing since last month that he is dead, but his body has not been found. ... No sign of Major Farran.

The Times 26th June 1947

The Government today issued a statement on the disappearance of the Jewish youth Alexander Rubowitz and the escape of Major Farran. ... The statement says that Rubowitz, who was found distributing Stern Gang literature on May the 5th, was not brought to any police station and has since disappeared. The court of enquiry into Major Farran's escape found no evidence that he was assisted in his escape by accomplices, but the two police officers responsible for his custody, one is being dismissed for negligence and the engagement of the other is being ended. ... Suggestions have been made that Major Farran was a member of a special unit employing unorthodox methods against the terrorists. No authority has ever been given for the use by any member of the police force of other than ordinary police methods in dealing with apprehended persons, and there is no suggestion of this ever having occurred in any other case.

The Times 30th June 1947

Major Farran ... gave himself up to the military police today (29th June 1947). The GOC Major Gen G.H.A. Macmillan and senior army officers are meeting this evening to consider the case.

The Times 30th June 1947

Three soldiers shot in the back in Tel Aviv. Fired at random into café filled with officers in Haifa. ... These murders are supposed to be reprisal for the disappearance and death of the Jewish youth Alexander Rubowitz in Jerusalem last month.

The Times 2nd July 1947

Major Farran at present under close arrest has requested legal aid and counsel will soon arrive from London by air. A summary of evidence will then be taken before a military court.

The Times 4th July 1947

... officially stated that Major Farran not charged with murder. A Govt spokesman said that Major Farran who, before he made his escape was extradited from Syria for questioning about the disappearance in May of a 17-year-old Jew, was under close arrest on a charge of being AWOL. No other charge will be preferred against him until the summary of evidence being taken is completed.

The Times 9th August 1947

MISSING JEWISH YOUTH – PARENTS' PETITION FAILS

The petition for an order against four respondents to show cause why a writ of habeas corpus should not be issued on behalf of Alexander Rubowitz who disappeared in Jerusalem on May 6th, was dismissed by the supreme court today. ... It was officially stated today that Major Farran was at present held on a holding charge of murder, pending a decision on further action.

The Times 13th June 1947

Messrs Lawrence, Collins and Fernley-Whittingstall, the solicitor acting for Major Farran ... point out was not

extradited from Syria but returned from there entirely of his own free will, having reported to the British Consulate in Damascus on first arrival here.

***The Times* 29th August 1947**

Judgement was reserved until Monday in the Jerusalem Magistrates' Court today on an application brought to hear evidence relating to the disappearance of Alexander Rubowitz in Jerusalem on May 6th. The application was made by Nehemia Rubowitz, brother of Alexander Rubowitz, under what is known as the Criminal Procedure (Trial upon Information) Ordinance.

The applicant's counsel said yesterday that it could be inferred from the facts of the disappearance that a person had been murdered and to his knowledge no one has been charged or taken into custody in respect of such a suspected offence.

Major Farran was in military custody on a holding charge of murder.

***The Times* 24th September 1947**
MAJOR FARRAN TO BE TRIED NEXT MONTH

... It is intended to hold a public trial by court martial in early October.

***The Times* 25th September 1947**

It is officially announced that Captain (formerly Major) Farran who has reverted to his substantive rank after more than 21 days absence from duty ... court martial held in Jerusalem on or after Oct 1, probably in Allenby Barracks.

***The Times* 2nd October 1947**
CAPT. FARRAN ON TRIAL – CHARGE OF MURDER – MISSING JEW YOUTH

Roy Alexander Farran, regular officer of the 3rd Kings Own Hussars, attached to the 1st Battalion Irish Guards. ... Charge of murdering near the Jerusalem-Jericho road on the night of May 6-7th a young Jew Alexander Rubowitz ... Pleaded Not Guilty.

The Judge Advocate Mr A. Melford Stevenson KC, Prosecuting Counsel Maxwell Turner, Defence Fearnley-Wittingstall and Bickford-Smith.

Capt. Farran, a sturdy built young man of 26 who fought with the resistance forces in Belgium, France, Germany and Burma, was awarded the DSO MC and two bars, Croix de Guerre and the American Legion of Merit and was wounded four times. He was seconded Palestine Police early 1947.

Guards were placed around the room and throughout the military court building, and on the approaches to the building road checks were posted. An object of great interest in the court was a grey felt hat, which a boy witness declared he found on the spot where he saw the youth being hustled away in a car, and which he had deposited in a synagogue.

Maxwell-Taylor – Alexander Rubowitz seen by brother Jacob at mother's house at about 6pm May 6th and was never seen again.

About 8pm a youth was seen being chased by a man who caught him and forced him into a car. The pursuer lost his hat, which was retained and handed to the police. On the sweatband were the letters "FAR-AN". Next morning Major Farran saw immediate superior Colonel Ferguson and had a conversation with him. On June 3rd Capt. Farran told a Sgt Faulkner that he had been "let down" and together they went to Syria with a Constable.

Capt. Farran returned on 17th June.

On June 19th he was provided with a notebook and paste, and stuck in some press cuttings; he then wrote in the book and sat back saying "That's that". The same night he was seen leaping over the bar in the officer's mess where he was under escort. The book was left behind in his quarters, but there was an objection raised to its contents, he (counsel), would not touch on the contents now.

29th June he walked into Allenby Barracks and gave himself up.

Evidence from Jacob Rubowitz that he had seen the hat in the synagogue – he had not been able to read the first two letters. After them came FAR.

Jacob Jacobson (13 years) saw Alexander Rubowitz chased ... hat dropped – took it to the synagogue. Pursuer wearing tennis shoes, slacks and an army type of shirt – the car contained men wearing articles of army uniform.

There were three ID parades and Jacob Jacobson did not pick out anyone.

Moshe Keshin was with Jacob Jacobson – car was M993. Saw the car 5 minutes later with the youth still in it, bearing the number plate M662.

Colonel Bernard Ferguson Assistant Inspector General Palestine Police since December 1946 in charge of training, declined to give evidence on a conversation he had had with Capt. Farran one morning early in May in the police officers' mess at Katemand, Jerusalem. Not prepared to make known details of that conversation, because certain of them might in certain circumstances tend to incriminate himself.

Sgt William Faulkner of the Palestine Police – early June Captain Farran told him he was going to Syria because he had been let down. He considered it his duty to accompany him as escort and he did so with a British Constable. He stayed there 6 days, leaving Capt Farran behind when he left.

... Capt. Farran plus 10 men of his squad had been put on an ID parade but none of the 5 witnesses had ID any of them.

The Palestine Post of the 19th June saying that three people had identified Captain Farran was not true.

Another officer referred to the hat – had FAR then an obscure letter and then AN. Where these letters had been it was now smeared, and he did not know how this came about.

***The Times* 3rd October 1947**
CAPTAIN FARRAN ACQUITTED. RUBOWITZ BODY NOT FOUND. NO EVIDENCE OF DEATH

... Found Not Guilty. This was after the prosecuting counsel said that there was no case to answer.

When the President of the court pronounced the verdict after an absence of 15 minutes police members of Capt. Farran's former squad and also some military men sitting in the court as spectators applauded. Capt. Farran left court immediately.

... Maxwell-Turner – there was no body and in the absence of evidence found to be inadmissible, and that

withheld by witnesses, there was no strong circumstantial evidence on which it would be proper to convict. *(Not admissible was the contents of Captain Farran's note-book.) There was no evidence of a killing.*

Colonel P.H. Laboucherie was Commanding Officer of 3 King's Own Hussars when he went to Syria and brought Captain Farran back.

Colonel Ferguson resigned from the Palestine Police and returned to the army.

***The Times* 7th October 1947**

The War Office yesterday morning confirmed reports that Captain Farran had reached Britain ... then denied it – saying there had been a misunderstanding.

***The Times* 14th October 1947**

Captain Farran arrived in Liverpool yesterday aboard the troopship *Orduna* from Port Said. In reply to questions ... had to see the War Office and would go home as soon as possible.

***The Times* 18th October 1947**

Jacob Rubowitz applied to the Magistrates' Court for a warrant for the arrest of Captain Farran on a charge of kidnapping for the purpose of murder. ... Could be brought to Palestine under the Fugitive Offenders Act 1881. The magistrates would here witnesses next Wednesday.

***The Times* 23rd October 1947**

New warrant issued in Jerusalem. Jerusalem Magistrate Dr G Stultz – issued warrant on charge of abducting – the question of whether the warrant can be executed is now being studied.

Colonial Office ... "unless and until" the Palestinian Government makes formal application for the return of Captain Farran, no action will be taken in this country. Any such application would have to be transmitted through the Colonial Office to the "appropriate authorities."

***The Times* 29th October 1947**
STAY OF PROCEEDINGS ORDERED

The Attorney General ordered a stay of proceedings – warrant not to be carried out. Evidence insufficient, witnesses had not identified Captain Farran.

***The Times* 4th May 1948**

Rex Francis Farran, 26, brother of Roy was killed on the 3rd May when he opened a parcel addressed to his brother at their home Histons Hill, Codsall. The parcel exploded and he received severe wounds in the stomach. He was taken to hospital but died soon afterwards with his father and mother at his bedside.

The book used in the bomb was Shakespeare's plays and was posted in Britain having had pages removed ... was alone in the dining room when he opened it. A younger brother Keith and his grandmother were elsewhere within the home.

Walls were covered in debris and windows blown out. Captain Farran was staying with (at the time) Colonel and Mrs William Stirling of Dunblane – left immediately for Wolverhampton. (Author's note: William Stirling was the brother of Colonel David Stirling the founder of the SAS and had like his brother commanded an SAS Regiment.)

Police, including three officers from Scotland Yard are making enquiries.

The explosion occurred three days off the first anniversary of the disappearance of Alexander Rubowitz, a member of the Stern Gang.

Rex was a draughtsman employed at an aircraft factory in Wolverhampton.

Captain Farran recently received a threatening letter from London E1 – in October the Stern Gang threatened to follow him "to the end of the world". (Author's note: By coincidence on page 6 of the 04/05/48 *Times*, the day of the report of his brother's death, a photo of Captain Farran advertising *Winged Dagger* his autobiography of war time service.)

***The Times* 5th May 1948**

Deputy Coroner W.B.C. Forsyth opened the Inquest on Rex Farran at Wolverhampton Town Hall. The Funeral is to be held in Codshill Parish Church 2pm Friday.

***The Times* 5th May 1948**
Report from Parliament, H.S. Mr Ede

I am sure that the House will be shocked ... investigation by police and the Chief Inspector of Explosives is being continued.

***The Times* 26th May 1948**
High Court of Justice King's Bench Division Libel Action – Major Roy Farran

Settlement announced of the libel action – Major Farran claimed damages from Mr Harry Ainsworth and Odhams Press publishers of *The People*.

Fearnley-Whittingham. Farran was seconded to Palestine Police in 1947. The move not of his seeking but he was persuaded it was his duty. He followed that duty although he had already decided to leave the army and follow a business career. *The People* published that Major Farran had flown to Palestine to join the Palestine Legion for Arabs to fight the Jews. Not true. Paper apologised.

***The Times* 30th June 1948**
Inquest on Rex Farran

Verdict – feloniously killed by some person/persons unknown. Superintendent T. Locally of Staffordshire's Criminal Investigation Department said that the investigation had not revealed who sent the bomb.

***The Times* 2nd November 1949**

Meeting of the Dudley and Stourbridge Conservative Division Selection Committee. Captain Farran stood down in favour of Major F.H.G. Goodhart.

***The Times* 14th November 1949**

Goodhart was rejected and Captain Farran stands again.

***The Times* 3rd December 1949**

Selection Committee decided that the name of Captain Farran was to go forward by the Council to a general meeting of the association as prospective Conservative Candidate for the Division.

***The Times* 24th February 1950**
The General Election Results
Dudley Electorate 69,275
Wigg, G.E.C. (Lab) 32,856
Farran Major R.A. (C) 19,825
White B.S. (L) 7470
Labour Majority 13,031

***The Times* 28th April 1950**
Letter from Major Farran to *The Times* from Malvern Worcestershire
Re Terrorism in Malaya ... The tactical answer to the problem does not lie in more troops or armoured cars. It lies more in the deployment of small parties of seasoned troops as far as possible independent of normal supply and equipped with great firepower in ratio to their numbers. (Author's note: At this stage the SAS had been disbanded but were to be reformed to go to Malaya to fight in the jungle and use the tactics proposed by Farran based on his long experience).)

***The Times* 5th May 1950**
Letter to *The Times* Guerrilla Warfare
Woodside, Welland near Malvern May 2nd ... Discussion on the use of Twin Vickers and numbers killed and the weight of mortar bombs for foot patrols. (Author's note: The twin Vickers was the large machine guns fitted firstly to the Long Range Desert Group vehicles and adopted by the SAS for their raiding Land-Rover – gave a very high concentration of fire power.)

***The Times* 10th May 1950**
Major Farran – his election campaign ... would give no support to the "Free Britain" anti Jewish organisation – where news sheet calls on sympathisers to vote for only avowedly anti-Jewish candidates. The news sheet is said to name Major Farran as worthy of the support of "Free Britain".

Major Farran then disappears from the pages of *The Times* and in 1997 the author when talking about Farran to a retired army general and neighbour discovered that they served together in the same Regiment and that Farran was alive and living in Canada. Consultation of the Canadian "Who's Who" dated 1994 page 350 revealed:

Farran, Roy Alexander DSO MC, commissioner, author, farmer b. UK 2 Jan 1921. Son of Stephen F. and Minnie (Tiarrington) Farran. e. Bishop Cotton School, Simla India, 1937. Royal Military College Sandhurst 1939; m Ruth d, William Ardern 1950; children Sally, Peter, Teresa, David. Alberta Racing Commission 1979. President Canada Amateur Jockeys Association; Commissioned The Queen's Own Hussars and served with the British Army 1939-48, Wounded Dessert Mediterranean. British Special Air Service rank Major; recipient DSO, MC with 2 bars, French Croix de Guerre with Palm, US Legion of Merit, Italian Gold Medal, Greek war medal. Publisher North Hill News Ltd 1954-73. Alderman city of Calgary 1961-71. Journalist with the Calgary Herald 1950-54 1979-88. Edmonton Journal 1979-83. CFAC 1969-71. Alta MLA 1971-79 Min of Utilities and Telephones 1972-75. Solicitor General 1975-79; raises cattle near Black Diamond Alta; weekly visiting Professor in Politics Sci Uni of Alta 1984-89; author "Winged Dagger" 1949, "Jungle Chase" 1952, "The Day After Tomorrow" 1955, "The Search" 1958, "History of the Calgary Highlanders" 1962, "Operation Tombola" 1968, "Never Had a Chance" 1972. Mem United Services Inst., Calgary. Hon member Lord Strathcona's Horse (RC). Roman Catholic. Recreations, riding, fishing, shooting. Clubs; Glencoe, Cavalry and Guards (London, Eng). Home PO Box 9, Site 30 RR, 8, Calgary Alta, T2J279. Office 5920 LA St, SW Calgary Alta T2H OG3

Footnote
In November 2004 there was a TV programme on BBC2 (not seen by the author) where it is said that a former member of the Stern Gang admitted being responsible for making and sending the bomb through the post from the UK.

Notes on Some Gallant Victorian Policemen

By Paul Dew

The brave actions of policemen that resulted in the award of gallantry medals have been studied and published widely. Less well known are the actions of policemen before medals for bravery became available when gallantry was recognised by voluntary societies like the Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire, the Order of St John and the Royal Humane Society. There were also presentations by individuals or groups of grateful residents and policemen were sometimes given money from the Bow Street Police Fund and by judges at other courts.

The first official medal was the Albert Medal in 1866, awarded for gallantry in saving life at sea and extended to actions on land in 1877. The better-known King's Police Medal was instituted in 1909 to recognise actions falling short of the bravery needed for the Albert Medal. However, before the awards currently used were sorted out and the pecking order was formalised the Commissioner was rewarding brave men with increases in pay, one-off payments and in very rare cases immediate promotion.

Rewards ranging from 5s to a few pounds were regularly published in Police Orders (PO) but only on rare occasions is it possible to link the reward with the separate entry – if there is one – of the conduct involved. Likewise with awards by judges there is rarely enough detail to know if courage was involved and such phrases as praiseworthy conduct may refer to dogged persistence in tracing someone not necessarily bravery.

The first reference to a medal being awarded to a policeman could be the bronze medal of the Order of St John for courageous conduct won by PC Little (E Div) on the 4th June 1878 (Police Order 29.7.1878). In this case PC Little rescued a lady from a most perilous position on a rooftop; the following day's Order directs that Superintendent Thomson (E Div), an Inspector, two sergeants and twelve constables from every division are to parade in dress uniform at Wellington Barracks on the 2nd August. This was when the medal was to be presented by the Duke of Manchester.

Immediate promotion to sergeant without examination was PC Eckett's reward (Police Order 11.11.1875) when he was promoted to Sergeant for gallantry at Woolwich. On that occasion he had defended himself and a prostrate comrade from attack by a desperate mob. He also received £5 from the Bow Street fund.

Another impressive case is that of PC Conway (N 110) who received 10gns from local people for courage, (May 1865) then £5 10s 6d from a church congregation, (July) an increase in pay (July), a further £2 8s 6d from local people (Sept) and as the icing on the cake another reward was approved in October. These were all for courageous behaviour in April 1865 when he apprehended a man with housebreaking tools who had tried to enter the local church.

As far as the ordinary policeman was concerned, as it would be of long-term benefit, a pay increase might have been the most attractive award.

PC Tidbury received this (Police Orders 17 and 23.12.1873) for leaping from a train going at 30mph to recapture a prisoner. The first reference to this action is the earlier order referring to a commendation for presence of mind and courage made by a judge and concludes 'Superintendent to recommend for award'. Tidbury's reward is an advance to first-class pay for energy and meritorious conduct.

Slightly more impressive was the pay increase for courage given to PC Wickens (Police Orders 11.7.1868) in which it is specified as by order of Sir Richard Mayne. Unfortunately no further details of what happened are provided.

Another example of a pay increase was that given to N Division PC Hiliman (Police Orders 22.3.1873) for courage in rescuing a female from drowning. He also moved up to first-class pay.

Yet another example of a rescue from drowning was that carried out by PC Sainty who was recommended for an award after rescuing a fellow constable (Police Orders 10.12.1873). His reward was an increase to first-class pay and his case was probably strengthened by the circumstances as he jumped into a canal in dense fog on the night of 9th December (Police Orders 24.12.1873). The promptness of the decision is also a feature of this and other cases. Presumably in these very low-tech days a few handwritten lines in a report and senior approval was adequate.

However, a rescue from drowning did not always pay so well. PC Farmer (Portsmouth Royal Dockyard) was recommended for an award (PO 8.7.1874) subject to the answers to questions about the depth of water and 'can the PC swim?' Presumably it was shallow water and he was a good swimmer as he only received 15s (PO 15.7.1874).

Other small rewards in the same year include a silver cream jug and £1 given to Met Police PC Rogers of Devonport Royal Dockyard (1.8.1873) for saving property at a fire. After another fire PC Porterfield (284C) was allowed by the Commissioner to keep a framed testimonial and 30s presented by the Royal Society for the Protection of Life from Fire for his exertion and endeavours to save life. Silverware was presented again in October when PS Parry (E Div) was allowed to retain a silver goblet and testimonial on vellum presented by a party of gentlemen. This was in appreciation of his ability in a recent apprehension (PO 30.10.1873) but it is unclear if this involved courage or good police work. A few years earlier (PO 14.4.1868) PC Hickeson had been given a very handsome gold watch by the local gentry as a reward for his courage in apprehending a burglar who was sentenced to 12 years penal servitude.

PS Faulkner (C Division) was awarded £10 for intrepid conduct in rescuing a fireman (PO 5.11.1873) and had the pleasure of seeing his name in print again when the Metropolitan Board of Works passed a resolution in recognition of his bravery in Great Windmill Street. In the Police Order (PO 20.11.1873) it says the fireman rescued was insensible because of the smoke and would probably have lost his life had he not been rescued.

Awards by judges include £5 from the Bow Street fund to PC 196Y Taylor for courage in apprehending a man convicted of burglary and attempting to murder the constable (PO 25.6.1873). A similar case was that of Divisional Detective PS Ham of P Div who was awarded £3 at the Central Criminal Court for courage while trying to apprehend a man for loitering (PO 30.10.1873). This award was followed by another £7 from Bow Street (PO 5.11.1873).

As can be seen there is a degree of hit and miss variety in the awards with a double bonus for some but for others a few shillings and a one line entry in Police Orders. Perhaps it is better now with a more structured approach and grading of danger, however it is impossible to compare the deeds mentioned with modern circumstances. They do, however, throw some light on an overlooked aspect of police history.

Are the 'Blue Boys' the Original Boys in Blue? –

An Evertonian Investigates

For some forty years now, the first team players of Everton Football Club have 'crossed the white line' at their Goodison Park stadium, often to individual cries from within the crowd of *'Come On You Blue Boys'* and always, and perhaps more poignantly, accompanied by the musical strains of the BBC TV series, *Z Cars.*

Debates have raged recently on Merseyside as to the origins of this *Z Cars* arrangement which means as much to the supporters of the Club as Gerry Marsden's *'You'll Never Walk Alone'* does to supporters of Liverpool FC and *'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles'* does to supporters of West Ham United and so forth. Opinion is divided, but one school of thought is that an actor who played PC Ian Sweet in the series was an Everton supporter, and a decision was taken to adopt the tune which is derived from the Liverpool sea shanty *'Johnny Todd',* following a private visit to the Everton training ground by the *Z Cars* cast. Another theory and one which may provide greater credibility, is that the TV programme, based on policing in Kirkby, now part of Merseyside Police and referred to as 'Newtown' in the series, which was ironically part of Lancashire Constabulary until April 1974, provided a local link similar to Gerry Marsden et. al. and the ubiquitous 'Mersey sound'. Everton play in the colour blue, therefore a contemporary popular tune at the time, reflected what was on their doorstep and in turn was beamed to millions of British homes each week, bringing with it famous characters like the fearsome and pugnacious, but otherwise loveable D/I Charlie Barlow, played by actor Stratford Johns, and the avuncular Sergeant Blackitt. In other words, *the Boys in Blue.*

A 1960s' marketing strategy? If it was so intended it was clearly a powerful partner to utilise. *Z Cars* was and remains the doyen of weekly crime programmes with 667 episodes. It ran from January 1962 until September 1978 on BBC 1. During the first series it was estimated at the time that it attracted some 14 million viewers.[1] A glance through the casting perhaps illustrates and reflects attitudes prevalent in the Police Service of that period; there were hardly any female actors cast in the series. One of course that was and must be acknowledged, for the major and influential part that she played, is the civilian radio-operator who coined the phrases, such as *'BD to Z Victor One'* thereby making them so noteworthy and so-easily associated with police TV dramas.

Interestingly, policing during this 1960s' period, and in this area of Lancashire, mentioning Kirkby[2] specifically and Unit Beat Policing in particularly was referred to in *Journal of the Police History Society Number 19.*[3]

It is also fair to say that the 40,000 or so that pack Goodison Park nowadays to hear the strains of *Z-Cars* when the Everton first-team take the field, are looking no further ahead than the next ninety minutes, or maybe as the Club's fortunes have improved dramatically of late, exotic European destinations. Notwithstanding this heady success, it can be safely claimed that the dyed-in-the-wool Evertonians are certainly not retrospectively pondering over the origins of the Club's *Z Cars* liaisons.

However, an historical perspective of the Club's heritage reveals a somewhat tangible, rather than a fictitious policing link albeit with a popular TV programme, to law enforcement and embryonic policing within the City of Liverpool.

The centre-piece of the Club's badge shows a round tower. This represents a structure that can be found on Netherfield Road, in the centre of the Liverpool inner-city district of Everton. It is known locally as 'The Roundhouse' or 'Prince Rupert's Tower', why it is called by this sobriquet, nobody quite knows, particularly since Prince Rupert was allegedly in the Liverpool area in 1644, when he was captured.[4] Possibly the link with incarceration fuelled what appears to be, a local fable.

Little in fact is known about this rather strange, small round brick structure that was designed by an unknown architect and erected in 1787[5] as a bridewell for detaining arrested drunken 'evertonians' – in the literal sense of the word. Of course, this is some years prior to the inception of the New Police in 1829. Drunks were housed overnight prior to subsequent appearances in local Courts. Its latter-day function has included housing gardening tools for council workmen and it fell into

disrepair. Fortunately, Everton FC about seven years ago recognised the significance of 'The Tower' to both the Club and the district and funded a refurbishment. A facsimile of the tower has now been built into the façade of the new Club superstore, and the mere existence of a pre-new police lock-up has taken on a fresh and welcome historical status.

If 'The Tower' existed purely in isolation, perhaps we could consider it to be merely the creation of an idiosyncratic Georgian Evertonian. However, it appears to have set a policing trend.

A similar construction exists in the Wavertree area of south Liverpool, some three miles away, erected in 1796[6] also in an effort to address a late-18th century drunkenness problem. Apparently, this was funded by the local villagers in preference to housing arrested persons at their own address overnight, when performing the role of Constable and retrospectively claiming the two shillings expenses. The post of village Constable was unpaid and performed on a Buggins Turn basis, for the duration of a year.[7] Obviously policing budgets pre-New Police were as instrumental to operational effectiveness as they are over 200 years later! Credible records for both structures remain scant and scarce and call for further research, however it appears the Wavertree lock-up remained functional until the 1840 period.

But, perhaps more importantly, was this an effort by adjoining neighbourhoods to address as a partnership late 18th century anti-social behaviour and consequently cast the die for neighbourhood policing as envisaged by the Home Office in *Building Safer Communities?* Binge drinking a new phenomenon?

I will leave those for the reader to ponder, but for now, get the video out, put on the *'Z Cars'* theme tune and *'Come On You Blues!'*

Peter Williams is a serving Inspector with Merseyside Police, an Associate Lecturer with the Open University, and an Evertonian.

References

1. www.museum.tv/archives/zcars
2. There is a public house in Kirkby named the 'Johnny Todd'.
3. Rogers, 2004.
4. Concise Dictionary of National Biography, p. 2603.
5. www.liverpool.gov.uk
6. www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/localhistory
7. Ibid.

From Mr Fred Feather, Essex Society for Family History

An Unknown Police Officer

Please find enclosed a copy photograph. The original was purchased in Southend on Sea on 4th February 2005. The main clue to the identity of the officer is a stamping on the reverse: 'M.Mings, Photographer, Ashbourne.' The local history society in that town cannot identify him but it seems to me unlikely that an officer would go off his patch in uniform to be photographed. Therefore I would consider it possible that Derbyshire or towns therein may be a possibility. My military uniform advisers suggest the style as in use 1890-1905. Some of your readers may know better.

Editor's Note: By the frogging on the tunic I would suggest this is either a Chief Constable or his Assistant. In the Metropolitan Police this pattern of tunic was latterly worn by Commanders (Rank equivalent to county Chief Constable), and Assistant Commissioners.

A tunic as worn by Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioners and Commanders which is virtually identical to the above uniform. *(Author's Photo but also thanks to the Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch Museum, Thames Ditton.)*

To the Mountains and Back, Adventures in Nyasaland

By Richard Ford

On 19th August 1960, when I was serving as a sergeant in the Bournemouth Borough Police Force, I was one of a party of British police officers seconded to the Nyasaland (now Malawi) Police to assist them during the emergency situation at that time. Flown out from England by the Royal Air Force Transport Command in something of a hurry, I was pleasantly surprised to he greeted on arrival in the new territory by the Nyasaland Police duty officer who was an ex-pupil of mine from my former Sandgate Police Training Centre days. Welcome drinks in the Officers' Mess followed.

Posted to the Chiradzula Mountain Police station, with the temporary rank of Inspector and as Second in Command, I soon found that to say 'it was not like Bournemouth' was the understatement of the year. The Chiradzula police district covered a wide area of mountainous bush country inhabited by approximately 50,000 African people. The police consisted of two European officers (including myself) and thirty-five African other ranks, so we were rather outnumbered and thin on the ground. Communications were difficult, messages often being conveyed by hand by runners who would not run during the hours of darkness through fear of being seized by wild animals or 'evil spirits'. Telephones were unreliable due to lines often being down, probably on account of falling trees or swinging monkeys, and although radio systems were better their use was limited.

The author as Police Inspector, Nyasaland 1960

To cover the wide area, African constables were sent out on week-long patrols, following a route sheet prepared and given to them by me. As some sort of check of their movements, they were supposed to obtain the signatures of native chiefs through whose villages they passed. If the chiefs couldn't write (and most of them couldn't) their thumb prints were to be obtained in lieu. The result, returned to me at the end of the week, was usually a grubby route sheet containing a lot of equally grubby thumb prints.

To me, leading a temporary 'bachelor' existence, it seemed a bit unfair that my African staff were, by native, custom, allowed to have more than one wife and often did. The only restriction was that they were only permitted to have one wife in their police quarters at one time. This sometimes led to problems when replacement operations were deemed necessary by the husband and the dispossessed wife would often run tearfully to my office, begging on her knees for my intervention which I naturally had to refuse. The African system of 'buying' wives was still operative and, finding one of my young constables in deep distress through being unable to raise the necessary cash against a time limit for purchase of his loved one, I loaned him the requisite sum of money to solve his problem. I wrote home to Mary in England to inform her that I had become a shareholder in an African wife, but as the loan was duly repaid it was not necessary for me to foreclose on the mortgage.

On inspecting the African constables' married quarters one day, in preparation for a visit from the Provincial Assistant Police Commissioner, I was amazed to find a hen sitting on a clutch of eggs in one kitchen. Here was a problem. Admittedly the bird shouldn't have been there but her eviction at her late stage of incubation would mean the loss of a valuable brood of chicks to the constable. Eventually compromise was reached by covering her with a clothes basket and on the great day, when the 'all highest' passed through, she just 'sat tight' and said 'nowt' and thus avoided detection and continued on her progress to motherhood.

In the hot summer weather the bush was tinder dry and one day some carelessly thrown embers by a houseboy caused a serious fire on the mountain. In the absence of any witness with him to support his story that he had had a quarrel with another man in the bush, struck him on the head with a rock and killed him, after causing the suspect to be detained in custody, the Officer in Charge and myself hastened to the scene of the alleged crime where we were amazed to find no body. After a search we eventually located the victim sitting in his hut and complaining of a headache. An appropriately reduced charge was then brought against the prisoner.

Returning to England early in the following year, and reverting to my local rank of Sergeant, I soon settled down again, quickly noting that the weather seemed cold. Worse climatic conditions were to follow later frequently reminding me of the warmer days of Africa.

"We Didn't Do Trauma"

By Stephen Wade

Sandra Wilkinson started her working life taking depositions in court. Then she was an integral part of the Moors Murders team – and this was before she became a policewoman in the Z Cars era, but she did far more than make the tea.

Sandra has a good stock of scrapbooks about her involvement in one of the then major murder enquiries in the history of crime. As we look through them and she points out locations on the Saddleworth moors, or talks about a woman detective she knew, I feel as if I'm revisiting a dark place in history. She shows me her photograph, as in the *Daily Mirror* at the time when Brady and Hindley were tried at Chester Assizes. Here is a woman with a story to tell, and it's been a long time since she showed these cuttings to anyone.

We met by chance. I write about true crime and spend hours in libraries and archives. Most of this work is about old newsprint and fading photos you find on a blurry microfilm image. But here was that rare thing, a chance to talk about a period in modern history when police work was just emerging from its *Blue Lamp* image and was being given to us as something close to the 'new documentary'. Not that it was being glamorised in the writing of the 1960s. Quiet heroism and career problems seemed to be the order of the day, and a PC was very non-PC by today's standards.

Sandra stepped into this world of mean streets and macho talk, and her photos show her wearing the stylish dark cape designed by no less a fashion guru than Norman Hartnall. But the impression she gives is that it wasn't macho at all – more gentlemanly. After all, this is the time in which it was considered unacceptable to swear on the football terraces if a woman was present. At the time, she was just taking up duties in Birkenhead. Her days as a secretary to the team of detectives who combed the wilds of Saddleworth were behind her. The Sandra of these images is every inch the professional, standing by a Panda car, or looking firm and controlled outside a police station. She displays the virtues of the British police as I recall them, in my teenage life in Leeds in the sixties: strong, visible, reliable, demanding respect.

The training course for this new life was at Padgate, Warrington. Sandra remembers this with real affection. 'It was the best time of my life ... I wept buckets when we had to leave,' she says. She knows the date as soon as she is asked: October 6, 1968. It was a year of riot and unrest over the Channel, and here we were losing several layers of innocence about modernity as well. You might say that at this point, our conceptions of the police were changing radically, as was the case with the entire notion of authority.

She notes that there was much pride in the training. There may have been a lively social side to the time, with entertainment being produced as part of the deal, but it was also tough. The drilling square was in use by eight in the morning and then it was down to some hard studying. All the details are still there as she fills in the picture. The famous cape was excellent quality, and the Cheshire force had much better standard of dress than the Manchester outfit. Sandra tells me that some of the badges were enamelled. All the official photos show a woman completely comfortable in her position, status and very obvious responsibility. The car shines, well cared for. The hat and jacket are immaculate.

From the seminar room and the role plays it was out into the stuff of life. Her photographs reflect that quasi-military life and the facial expressions are firm, in control. Yes, she had experienced a certain notoriety during the previous few years, as fate brought her a central role in a media show as the tabloids struggled to find ways of extracting daily stories from Hyde while the force was out combing the moors. But nothing in that phase prepared Sandra for the police work on the streets. She had been only nineteen when she began work as secretary for Bob Talbot and the Moors team.

But in police work, she witnessed things that affected her deeply, such as being there when a mother callously rejected her own child, telling her to her face that she wanted nothing to do with her. 'That was the worst thing I ever saw,' she says. But when I ask about the traumatic experiences in a police career, she smiles and says, 'We didn't do trauma ... there was no time.'

Whereas in the Moors investigation, she had sat in the incident room and answered the phone, now in uniform, she saw pain and suffering at first hand. She brings to mind one quiet Sunday morning and the harrowing experience of seeing the charred bodies of six children in the back of a car after a man had shot through some lights at high speed, just shattering the peace of that weekend lull in between the Saturday drunks and the afternoon in the park

Of course, I have to mention the image of the macho, unreformed male in the police, slotted into our consciousness through a thousand television dramas since *Z Cars*. But Sandra is eager to put me right on this one. She uses the word camaraderie, and explains that there was professional respect, and that teamwork was at the core of everything. She talks about 'gentlemanly' officers and a very different basis of relationships in the force, reflecting a world with just as many social problems as now, but maybe more easily understood and remedied.

As for her work in the Moors case, it is a fascinating chapter of history in the annals of modern police work. It was steady, regular and ordered enquiry, with meticulous monitoring and recording. I picture her alone in the central office as the world's press darted around frantically outside. In a pre-computer age, the office work functioned around phone calls, record cards and a coded range of knocks on the office wall: one for tea, two for a useful communication and three for 'get out there now!' The days of the enquiry were long and hard, Sandra being collected at eight-thirty in the morning, taken to the office in Hyde, and then work progressing steadily right through to eight at night.

The journalists and writers flocked to Hyde and to

Sandra's office. She met Emlyn Williams, the author of the first book on the case, *Beyond Belief*. She and a friend were dogged by reporters and they sometimes had to hide. The whole business became so farcical that one day a newspaperman came into her office pretending to be ill. His performance was worthy of Olivier, but transparently sham. She had to fuss and seem concerned, while all the time watching him like a hawk.

The team managed to snatch an hour at the Queen's Head in Hyde for some bonding, but Sandra stresses that the talk on these occasions was strictly unwinding, easy small talk. There is nothing sensational in her memories of the time. It was 'just careful, routine work, as with any case ... we had no idea at the time that this was to be momentous, and in so many books.'

She always wanted to be a police officer, from the time of her first job as a clerk in a magistrates' court, but never dreamed that a few years on from that, she would be snapped by the *Mirror* cameraman. I sense that, even today, when her early career and the story of those awful child-murders is 'classic crime' history, there is a certain respectful reserve in her attitude, and every sentence she utters has a tone of a less hectic time and a more people-centred time. I can imagine her on the beat or taking a call, and I feel assured that she would have been totally professional. Her most frequent word when talking about colleagues from that time is 'gentleman'.

After the interview, I understand why she chooses to say more about policing Birkenhead than what Myra Hindley said to her in the office. It has something to do with actually doing something positive to help out on the streets and in the unhappy homes. The psychopaths can be left to specialists and therapists, but there are plain folk out there being robbed and attacked or just drinking too much and disturbing the peace, and you can do something about that.

The 1901 Birmingham Town Hall Riot

By Geoffrey Floy

The serious disorder in and around the Birmingham Town Hall on 18 December 1901 during which occurred the tragic death of an 18-year-old single workman, Harold Ernest Curtin, of Lozells Road, Birmingham, caused by a blow on the head from an unknown policeman's truncheon, cast a dark shadow over the Birmingham City Police for some time. The event and the public disquiet about the police action presented a difficult problem for the Watch Committee in investigating the alleged police misconduct to the satisfaction of the City Council and the citizenry in what was the most serious complaint against the force since its inception in 1839. It soon became apparent that the Committee would be alone in the task with the non-interventionist stance of the Home Secretary on questions affecting provincial policing methods and the City Council's reluctance to arrange for an independent enquiry presided over by the holder of a judicial office.[1]

The disorder happened at a political rally organized by the Birmingham Liberal Association with David Lloyd George (1863-1945), a Liberal Member of Parliament, invited as the principal speaker. George's intended presence was viewed by the local press as one of 'supreme courage or of considerable foolhardiness'.[2] He had loudly condemned the Conservative Government for Britain's involvement in the Boer War (1899-1902), a conflict he claimed was being fought to enrich the gold and diamond monopolists in the Rand. He was fiercely critical of the Government's handling of the war and the performance of the military commanders in the field. Included in his denouncement were the alleged concentration camp atrocities. His censure extended to a Birmingham Conservative Member of Parliament, Joseph Chamberlain (1836-1914), who was Secretary for the Colonies from 1895-1903 and as such closely involved in the policy affecting South Africa. In the House of Commons on 10 December 1901 a well-publicised clash occurred between the two men when George raised the question of Ministers of the Crown having direct or indirect interest in any company competing for contracts with the Crown unless the nature and extent of the interest was first declared. This was clearly directed at Chamberlain with reference to the 'Chamberlain companies' and the family interests in those concerns manufacturing arms in Birmingham. Whilst George abstained from accusing Chamberlain of corruption, he was severe enough to pronounce his conduct as improper.[3]

Chamberlain was a well-respected and influential man in the City and a former Mayor and Councillor. His part in the war was applauded in the Birmingham newspapers and approved of by most of the residents. The family's business interests in arms production were public knowledge and its various Birmingham companies maintained a large workforce. The city had a long history of armament production which naturally flourished in time of war. This was particularly so during the Boer War with regular well-paid employment for the workers and large profits for the industry.[4] Jingoism had existed in Birmingham throughout the war and the strongest support came from people in the working-class districts encircling the city centre and within easy walking distance of the Town Hall and the adjoining Victoria Square. Victorious British campaigns and the relief of the besieged garrisons in 1900, especially Mafeking, were celebrated by crowds cheering and dancing in the streets.

The war undoubtedly had a significant impact on many Birmingham people, not only economically, but in stimulating their patriotism. George had earlier faced stiff opposition at meetings in other towns and the wisdom of him venturing into Birmingham against this background and his attack on Chamberlain was highly questionable. In spite of the overt hostility and adverse publicity in the press, George insisted on keeping the appointment.

In early December 1901 resentment about George's visit started to increase in the Birmingham newspapers

which denounced him as 'a traitor' and that 'his appearance would be an insult which every patriot should resist'. Sandwichmen paraded the streets around the Town Hall bearing boards with slogans such as 'COME AND DEMONSTRATE FOR KING AND COUNTRY' and 'BIRMINGHAM WANTS NO TRAITORS'.[5]

On the eve of the meeting the *Birmingham Daily Mail* accurately predicted: 'There is every reason to believe that Birmingham is menaced by the prospect of serious rioting'. Although the meeting was scheduled for 7.30 p.m. by mid-afternoon people were already assembling in Victoria Square and four brass bands, one at each corner of the Town Hall, were playing patriotic airs. The Chief Constable, Charles Haughton Rafter, later Sir Charles (1899-1935), anticipating that a major incident was imminent, deployed under his personal command 400 men, two-thirds of the force, in the vicinity. Prior to his appointment in Birmingham in 1899, Rafter had served as a District Inspector in the Royal Irish Constabulary and had first-hand experience in dealing with mass disorder. George arrived there at 6.15 p.m. disguised in a rough overcoat and a peaked cap and was successfully smuggled inside the Town Hall.

Admission to the meeting was restricted to ticket-holders and by 7 p.m. a sizeable audience of George supporters had gathered inside the building. Outside it a large number of non-ticket holders were attempting to gain entry. Efforts by the police to exclude them failed and a substantial disorderly mass managed to surge inside. It was estimated that 7,000 persons were jammed within when at 7.30 p.m. George appeared on the platform. He was jeered and greeted with shouts of 'Pro-Boer', 'Traitor' and 'Kill him' and the uproar was so vociferous that George was inaudible. His attempt to address the meeting coincided with an outburst from those people still trying to invade the premises and who had then started hurling brick-ends at the windows. The fusillade prompted the protestors inside to advance towards the speaker's platform and breach the protecting police cordon. George was rescued from the horde and barricaded in a rear room. His escape from the building was arranged by dressing him in a police cape and helmet so he could form part of a squad of constables which was then marched to a nearby police station. The guise worked and later that night he left Birmingham by train none the worse for his visit.

The evacuation of George was the least of the chief constable's problems because the unruly element in the audience left the building and joined forces with those demonstrating outside who were convinced George was still inside. The Chief Constable assured the crowd that George had left and repeatedly asked it to disperse.

He was disbelieved and a door of the hall was battered down with a scaffolding pole. This action generated more violent behaviour and further requests to break-up and leave were ignored. What happened next is unclear and in particular whether or not the Riot Act was read as suggested in some press reports. What is clear, although there was doubt who ordered it, a baton charge was used to remove persons from the square adjoining the hall. The majority of the crowd was chased along Colmore Row and it was alleged that the police were striking indiscriminately with their batons at the fleeing mobsters. It was during this pursuit that the young man was killed and 40 other persons received injuries which detained them in hospital. Two constables were seriously hurt with a scaffolding pole and a brick-end and a few received minor wounds. Only a small number of arrests were made for causing damage. National publicity centred on the dramatic escape of George dressed as a policeman rather than the 'riot' and the unfortunate victim. This was not so with the Birmingham newspapers. There was an outcry about the fatality and strong condemnation of the police for mishandling the whole affair by resorting to excessive and unnecessary force.[6]

The Watch Committee realised from the public indignation that pertinent questions would be raised about the police action. It resolved on 24 December 1901 to invite the Home Secretary, or, if he declined, the City Council, to arrange an independent investigation into the police handling of the meeting and demonstration. The Home Secretary, Mr C.T. Ritchie (later Viscount Ritchie) replied on 6 January 1902 that 'he did not feel justified in instituting such an enquiry'. On 13 January 1902 a Coroner's jury returned a verdict of 'manslaughter by a police constable unknown'. A rider was added censuring the police for 'culpable excess of duty' and for 'shielding the officer who struck the fatal blow'. On 4 February 1902 the Watch Committee presented a report together with one from the Chief Constable to the City Council 'requesting that an independent enquiry should be set up without delay'. The Council declined to do so and instructed the Watch Committee to undertake one and report its conclusions to the Council. It is clear that the Council paid no heed to pressure from the local press and in particular a powerful editorial in the *Birmingham Daily Post* of 14 January 1902 following the Coroner's Inquest demanding an urgent independent enquiry into the policing of the event.

The Watch Committee conducted a thorough investigation. This spanned 12 sessions during which evidence was received from 48 members of the force and 66 other witnesses. The final report was submitted to the Council on 8 April 1902 and its principal conclusions were:

1. That no blame be attached to the police stationed inside the hall;
2. that the police outside had behaved with forbearance and self-control until the breaking down of the door;
3. that the baton charge, though begun without orders, was justified by the aggressive temper of the crowd and that on balance it was a spontaneous reaction prompted by the men facing a mob;
4. That the Chief Constable, who had assumed control of the charge, tried to stop it when it had gone far enough;
5. that entirely innocent persons had been struck;
6. that no evidence had been obtained identifying, either by name or number, those policemen who had lost their self-control and committed unjustifiable assaults;
7. and that certain officers of the force had committed errors of judgment but not such as to deserve censure.

A lively debate was held by the Council after which the Watch Committee's report and its conclusions were approved by 38 votes to 17. This outcome did not satisfy popular feeling in the City or its newspapers which

continued to express dissatisfaction with the Council's resolution for some time. There was considerable concern that no disciplinary action was to be taken against any member of the force. There was also significant unease that all the severe criticism was directed at unidentified policemen and that no specific attempt had apparently been made to dispel the suspicion viewed by the Coroner's jury that the policeman who had wielded the fatal blow was being shielded by his comrades. As far as the City Council and the Watch Committee were concerned no further steps were known to have been taken to counter the allegations. There were no public demonstrations of anti-police sentiments or any criminal or civil proceedings against the Watch Committee or the force as a whole or individual members. The most noteworthy consequence was that Mr Lancaster, the chairman of the Watch Committee, lost his seat on the City Council in November 1902.[7]

This example of alleged police misconduct arising from a testing operation aimed at ensuring the maintenance of the freedom of speech and assembly, highlights the almost unattainable goal of an early 20th century Chief Constable in his endeavours to achieve that object without the benefit of the later sanctions provided by the 1930s Public Order legislation. There is no evidence to suggest that an attempt was made to prevent the Town Hall being used as a venue or that George wavered in his intention to appear or that he sought special protection. Whilst there was ample advance warning of a likely violent protest, the Chief Constable would have undoubtedly known that demonstrations against George had occurred at meetings in other parts of the country several months earlier without the eruption of serious disorder. Although armed with that intelligence to his credit he erred on the side of caution by deploying two-thirds of his available manpower. Rafter was renowned for his professionalism and determination to uphold the law. Typically he took personal command and had it not have been for that and his foresight in providing ample coverage the consequences for George could have been disastrous and the final outcome of the event even more calamitous. Rafter continued to serve with distinction, was knighted in 1927, and died in office in 1935 at the age of 78 years after a total of 52 years' police service.[8]

The City Council's arrangement for the Watch Committee to approach the Secretary of State may have been a tactical move to avoid any possible criticism that his aid had not been sought. The wording of the committee's request suggested it was anticipated that no government sponsored enquiry would be ordered when it stated 'in the event of the Secretary's refusal, it was agreed that the City Council should conduct its own enquiry'.[9] The Watch Committee appeared to have done its best by examining as it were both sides of the 'contest' between the public and the police in an effort to establish the truth of what happened. The committee's prime problem was in overcoming its lack of independence and impartiality in view of its duty to 'maintain an efficient police force capable of keeping law and order' whilst investigating the conduct of its members in an operational matter. This vested interest was bound to lead to an accusation of bias or a 'cover up' when no member of the force was held responsible for the consequences of the baton charge. In the prevailing hostile climate it was an impossible attainment for the committee to placate public feeling and restore confidence in the force by showing that the difficulties facing the police that night justified a spontaneous agressive reaction. It seemed that after the City Council's acceptance of the findings that there was no practical alternative to letting the tragic incident rest.

Acknowledgement

To the City of Birmingham Reference Library, Local History Department, for access to contemporary Birmingham newspapers.

References

1. See Emsley, C., 'The English Police: A Political and Social History', Second Edition, 1966, pp. 65-70, for instances of the Home Secretary's refusal to intervene in provincial policing problems.
2. *Birmingham Daily Post*, 4 December 1901.
3. *Birmingham Daily Post*, 12 December 1901.
4. At the AGM of the Birmingham Small Arms Company in 1901 record profits were recorded and a payment of a 40 per cent dividend to shareholders. See Barnsby, G.J., 'Birmingham Working People: A History of the Labour Movement in Birmingham, 1650-1914', 1989, p. 380. See also pp. 378-380 for Birmingham Business and the Boer War and details of the Chamberlain family businesses engaged in arms production.
5. The David Lloyd George Museum, Llanystumdwy, Criccieth, North Wales, has a comprehensive display of press reports and photographs relating to the incident.
6. For other accounts of the event see Reilly, J.W., 'Policing Birmingham: An Account of 150 Years of Police in Birmingham', 1989, pp. 48-49 and Floy, G.A., 'Policing Birmingham: A Study of a Borough Police Force 1839-1914', unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1997, pp. 124-128. See also Barnsby, op. cit., pp. 376-378 for background to the protest of George's visit to Birmingham and an account of the disturbance. Mention is made of the Birmingham Liberal Association paying for the replacement of 1,198 windows broken in the Town Hall and surrounding premises.
7. See Vince, C.A., 'History of the Corporation of Birmingham', Volume 4, 1923, pp. 324-332 for the coverage of the City Council and the Watch Committee enquiries into the event.
8. Rafter was exempt from the compulsory retirement of chief constables at 65 years of age introduced by The Police Pensions Act 1921.
9. Vince, Vol.4, op. cit., p. 332.

The Riot at Chipping Norton – 1845

By Len Woodley

The town of Chipping Norton situated in West Oxfordshire, having been granted a Charter of Incorporation in 1606, was entitled, in the nineteenth century, under the terms of the Municipal Corporations Act, to form its own town Police. When the authorities of Chipping Norton wanted men for their new Police in 1836 they sought the assistance of the Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police. After due consideration two men, Sergeant Charles Knott and a constable, were considered to be experienced enough to be sent to Chipping Norton. The Borough Police was only to consist of two men and Sergeant Knott was to be its head at an annual salary of £80. Knott, it would appear, had been one of the first Metropolitan Policemen, having joined in September of 1829. He had been promoted to Sergeant in May 1830.

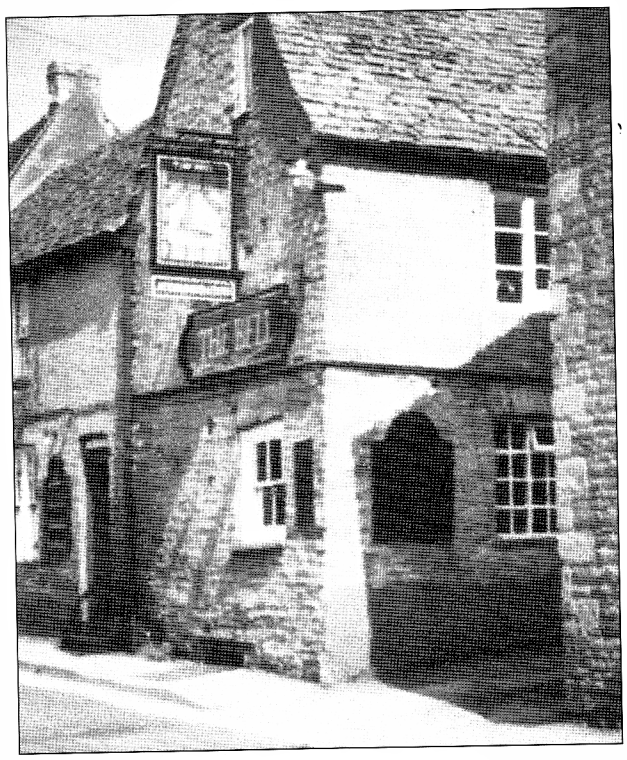
If Chipping Norton town council anticipated trouble from their citizens they were going to see that the 'new' Police would be able to deal with it firmly, for in addition to the truncheons, lanterns and handcuffs that were needed, they also ordered from the suppliers a '... pair of best Police percussion pistols, gunpowder flasks to contain balls and caps ...' and '... Police cutlasses and belts'. They did not order, apparently, uniform for their Policemen. As the years passed constables would come and go for different reasons. Knott remained as the head of this minuscule 'force' for the next ten years. With the usual matters that a Police force had to deal with in the 1830s and 1840s, even one as small as the two-man Chipping Norton Police, such as drunkenness and theft there were, sometimes, instances of violence shown to the enforcers of the law which led to extreme penalties being handed out to the perpetrators. On one occasion, for assaulting the two Police Officers – the entire Police force – whilst they were performing their duty, an offender was sentenced to 15 years transportation. In 1845, however, matters were to come to a head when an incident involving the head of the force caused a sudden death, triggered a riot in the town, and the arrest and trial of Knott.

A Trivial Incident

The trouble started over a trivial incident. Robert Hall, described as a higgler had a stable in the town, which he let to a William Slatter. In late 1845, Hall suspected that Slatter had stolen some chaff and accused him of theft. Slatter denied larceny and so Hall fetched 'Inspector' Knott to investigate the matter. By the time that the head of the force arrived a crowd of onlookers had gathered to see what would happen. Knott asked Hall, in the presence and hearing of Slatter, if the chaff in question belonged to him. Hall replied in the affirmative. Slatter was standing by a manger pulling the chaff towards his horse. Knott made a move towards him and Slatter spun round to face the Policeman. Feeling threatened by what he took to be a hostile act towards him, Knott said, "Is that what you mean Slatter? Then I must settle it with you." He thereupon drew a truncheon from his pocket and struck Slatter on the side of his head. Stunned by the blow, Slatter responded, "You have done a nice thing for me." Knott then put handcuffs on him and appeared about to hit his prisoner once more, when one of the witnesses grabbed hold of his arm and implored the Officer not to strike Slatter again. Knott accused this man, John Padbury, the keeper of the nearby Bell Inn of attempting to take his prisoner from him. Padbury answered that if Knott wanted assistance with his prisoner, there were enough people present to help him. Slatter was then taken to the 'station house' and locked up. He complained about the blow to his head, but medical attention was not sought. The only other Policeman in the town and who was on duty that night, was James Male. He went to the lock-up at 1 a.m. and to him, Slatter looked all right and actually spoke to the constable. Male, according to his later testimony, did not go in but carried on with his other duties.

Slatter was Face Down Dead!

At 8 a.m. the following day, Inspector Knott resumed duty and went to the lock-up to see his prisoner. To his great astonishment he found him lying face down on the bench quite dead. Knott immediately summoned a local doctor, John Fawell, who attended and examined Slatter. He certified that the prisoner was dead and had been so for four or five hours. He also noticed that he had been sick before he had expired. The news of this 'death in custody' sped around the town and several people became so incensed by the events that they pursued Knott, who had to hide himself in a house and dared not move until some more responsible persons rescued him. He was placed for his own protection in the lock-up, next door to where the body of Slatter lay. Notwithstanding



The Bell at Chipping Norton

this, a large number of angry people from the surrounding villages now came into the town. The crowd grew steadily during the course of the day. Some Policemen from Stow in neighbouring Gloucestershire were sent for to augment the by now 50 per cent depleted Chipping Norton Police. Their presence apparently only inflamed the mob, one being attacked quite violently, it would appear, and they were returned to their home ground. Special constables were sworn in, but throughout the night the throng grew ever bigger and paraded outside the Town Hall. They were, according to newspaper reports, vociferous throughout the night. The following morning, such was the antagonism shown towards the town's chief Police Officer when he appeared at the Inquest that it was thought advisable, by the authorities to send for a troop of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry. In addition, the Mayor caused handbills to be issued requesting people to keep the Peace. The Yeomanry duly arrived and remained in position until the verdict of the Coroner's jury was announced. The jury listened to the evidence, particularly that relating to the post mortem examination of the deceased, hearing that his death had been caused by a blow to the head. They returned a verdict of manslaughter. When this was announced to the crowd outside they were suitably mollified and later, when Knott was taken to Oxford Prison accompanied by a small number of the Yeomanry, there was some shouting from the crowd that were still assembled. After that they dispersed quietly. The deceased man was buried on the Sunday following the incident and the ceremony was apparently attended by a large number of people. The *Banbury Guardian* commented that the general feeling in the town was that the blow was unjustifiably unnecessary, *'But'*, it added, *'it is justice to the Policeman to say that he has been in the town for nine or ten years and in the Metropolitan Police from their first establishment.'* The newspaper also added, 'The deceased had been before imprisoned and convicted of theft.'

"No Partiality or Indulgence to Evade Justice has in Any Way been Shown to Me"

Whilst he was in Oxford Gaol awaiting trial, Knott wrote a letter to the Town Council. This was dated 27 November and states; *"Gentlemen, You will, I trust, hold me excusable thus addressing you upon the subject of my unfortunate situation more especially upon consideration that the affray took place while in the execution of my duty using every effort possible to obtain the body also the property of an individual who had committed a felony. I have been advised by friends to employ Mr. Price of Burford or a Mr. Brunner of Oxford as professional gentlemen to take my defence in hand. Should therefore retain either of the above and at a loss to know by whom the expenses are to be defrayed – tis certain and very reasonable it does not lay within my power to do so. Therefore in mature consideration that I have been employed in your service as a Police Constable for the last nine years flatter myself during which period I have served you faithfully and honorably. You have never reason to complain of any rash or violent conduct in taking prisoners into custody or in any way had occasion to censure me for inefficiency of duty or any improper conduct. Even in this instance had not the blow missed the Poor unfortunate individuals hands to prevent him striking me (who shewed fights) this incident would not have happened. Permit me therefore earnestly to solicit your consideration in this matter no doubt you will follow the same course as the Commissioners of the Police in London and allowing me half my salary. It is my determination to remain here so as to convince the public and the Prosecutors in this unfortunate case that no partiality indulgence or means effected to evade justice has in any way been shown to me. That when the jury of my country shall have determined this case by their verdicts and the decision of my Lord Judge have been given 'if in my favor', which I have no doubt of, I can then return to Chipping Norton resume my duties with the same stability and credit as formerly. Should you think proper. If not I presume you will have no objection to providing for some other employments. Until then I trust you will not discard me but comply with my humble request for some provision being made for my wife and family and my defence which I believe in almost every Police Establishments in the Kingdom. Leaving myself entirely in your merciful hands, I am Gentlemen, Your most obedient Servant, Charles Knott."*

The Police Officer had Drawn Something from his Pocket

Knott appeared before the Assizes in March and the principal witnesses went through their evidence once again. Hall said that Slatter had taken some of his chaff and that, when Knott had attempted to regain it, Slatter had faced the Police Officer who had drawn something from his pocket and had struck the deceased. Padbury, who kept the Bell Inn at Chipping Norton and who was present at the scene stated that Knott had produced some handcuffs and had told Slatter to, "Put your hands in here." Slatter had responded, "I shall not," and had pulled back his hands and would not comply with the Policeman's order. Padbury was adamant that Slatter did not raise a hand to hit the Police Officer. Knott had pulled out a 'bludgeon' saying that he would settle that. He had then struck Slatter, who would have fallen down, had he not been prevented from so doing by falling against the manger. Padbury heard Slatter complain about the blow, and seeing Knott raising his arm as if to strike another blow, had prevented him from doing so, saying, "Don't strike him again. There are plenty of us to put the cuffs on." Knott had turned on him, saying, "I know my business. Are you going to release my prisoner?" The handcuffs had been then placed on Slatter.

"The Character of the Police Constable is at Stake"

Other witnesses gave similar evidence and then John Male entered the witness box. He was, he explained, a constable at Chipping Norton at the time of the incident, although he was not now. He had known the deceased, he added. He had often been in trouble and had known him to violently resist the Police. An objection was then raised as to the line of questioning but the Judge interposed: "It is perfectly proper.

"The character of the Police Constable is at stake and much depends on the character of the deceased. The Police are bound with the utmost vigilance, temperance and mercy to execute their duty but the character of the prisoner is of great importance in enabling us to perform the correct judgement as to the manner in which the prisoner acted on this occasion." Male continued with his

evidence by saying that he had known Slatter, on one occasion to draw a knife to resist the Police. Another time he known that he had 'rescued' a prisoner from custody. "He was," said the former Chipping Norton Policeman, "very violent." Again the trial Judge interrupted. "This is the point. He had been trying to find out why handcuffs had been taken on this occasion. For the evidence now produced, he should have said, the prisoner taking the handcuffs was a very improper proceeding. To take handcuffs for a charge for a first offence of this kind was, he considered, putting an unnecessary disgrace on the party. But if he had been known to resist the Police and even to draw a knife, the case was of quite a different character and the officer only manifested a proper discretion in what he had done in taking the handcuff." Male resumed his evidence. He had gone to the lock-up about one in the morning. Slatter had spoken in his usual tone. He had not perceived any difference in his voice. He had not gone in but merely looked in. John Farwell, a surgeon of Chipping Norton gave evidence of seeing Slatter after he had been summoned by Knott. He had found Slatter lying on the bench, flat on his face. He appeared to have been dead between four and five hours. He had been sick before he had died. Dr Farwell now gave the results of the post-mortem he had performed upon the late prisoner. He had found a fracture of the skull from a blow. A blood vessel had been ruptured which had caused pressure on the brain. After such a blow, a man might live four or five hours. Under cross-examination Dr Farwell said that Slatter's skull had been unusually thin. Such a blow that had been inflicted would not have had such an effect if the skull had been of the usual thickness. Knott had told him that he had struck the blow. Dr. Farwell added that he had known the Police Officer for some years and bore the character of a zealous, intelligent and humane officer.

Knott was to be Sadly Disillusioned

Mr Keating, who was appearing for the accused, now addressed the Jury. He began by saying that from the long knowledge he had of the prisoner from his having come in the course of his duty to the Assizes, it was with great anxiety and pain that he now appeared as counsel for him on a charge like this. But the question before them was, whether the prisoner had exceeded the discharge of his duty in the act by which the unfortunate deceased came to his death. ... He then proceeded to call several character witnesses, who included a solicitor from Stowe, the clerk to the Chipping Norton Magistrates and the Clerk of the Peace, all of whom testified that with ten years knowledge of the prisoner as a Police Officer, they considered him a vigilant, intelligent and humane Policeman, who was very conciliatory in his manner. It was now the turn of the Judge to sum up. He pointed out that the deceased had been charged with stealing a quantity of chaff and that the Officer must not only apprehend the prisoner but secure the chaff as well. The unfortunate deceased resisted and the handcuffs were produced. The deceased refused to put them on and on offering resistance the unfortunate blow was struck and proved fatal. The effect of the blow, his Lordship continued, was deeply to be lamented and no one could more deplore it than the prisoner at the bar, but from the evidence of Male, the previous behaviour of the deceased had fully justified the prisoner carrying the handcuffs with him and in using force on the occasion. The question for the jury to decide was, had the prisoner done more than was necessary in the vigilant and careful discharge of his duty. The law, he stated, was very jealous of the conduct of public officers. After the resistance afforded by Slatter to his securing the chaff was he more violent than the case justified? If not, in their opinion, they would acquit him. The Jury retired but returned after only a few minutes returned and enquired whether the handcuffs had been produced before the blow had been struck. The Judge reviewed the evidence of Padbury and replied, "Certainly." The jury then said that they were satisfied and immediately gave a verdict of "Not guilty." There was an outbreak of cheering in the courtroom but it was soon quietened down and Knott was released. If Knott thought that he would resume where he had left off, he was to be sadly disillusioned. On 9 March he was summarily dismissed from his position as *'one of the said constables of the borough of Chipping Norton for being in our opinion unfit in the discharge of his duty.'*

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Sources

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The Guardian, The Times, Jackson's Oxford Journal.

Book Review

Judgement Impaired

Law, Disorder and Injustice to Victims in 21st Century Britain

Michael Hughes

Unfortunately due to the late arrival of this book I have not had time to read it in any great detail. With some 800 pages I have only been able to dip into this publication. However, Michael Hughes has put into print much of what is said and thought by the great unheard, that is the vast majority of people who don't make a fuss and just get on with their lives in a law-abiding manner. Fortunately or unfortunately for them they do not have the overwhelming experiences of the average police officer to give them any impetus to stand up and be heard. After reading this book I think that they may. It would be easy to dismiss this book as just another ex-copper having a rant, however the detail put into the content is painstaking, meticulous and compelling. Mr

Hughes is an ex-detective with many years of experience. As with all ex-coppers and probably anyone else connected with the process his experience has left him with an abiding realization that the criminal justice system is about anything but justice, either for the criminal and certainly not for the victim. Mr Hughes begins his book with an indictment against the government and in particular Prime Minister Tony Blair and ex-Home Secretary David Blunkett. The phrase *'We will be tough on crime and the causes of crime'* is used as the starting point where Mr Hughes gradually proves the complete nonsense peddled by this government on Law & Order reform as just more hot air to gain power. The chapters cover a particular crime each listed as a separate indictment. Hughes also covers specific criminal cases and the gradual decay of conduct and morals in today's society. This is typified by the frequent lapses in decent behaviour by persons in the public eye in whom many people tend to emulate. The failure of police to respond in an appropriate manner is caused by a lack of funds and more often by politically correct (and ambitious) senior police officers. The exploits of certain headlining criminals and yobboes the system seems unable to deal with are documented as is the behaviour of youngsters binge drinking in town centres. What this book illustrates is what we are all aware of, that law and order is gradually breaking down in such an insidious way that there is never enough to pin down on the government of the day. The do gooders and hindsight technicians frequently point out the failings of a beleaguered and under funded police force instead of looking at the system and how recidivist offenders are again and again let off the hook to re-offend through an incompetent or naïve judiciary. In fairness the book is not all negative and a chapter titled *In Praise of the Judiciary* points out good practice; lastly the author himself makes some common sense suggestions to alleviate the situation. This will not be a comfortable book for those in power to take in and Mr Hughes has attempted to cover all the angles thus making it a long read. Unfortunately I feel that its sheer size would put many ordinary people off and at £30 it is not cheap. For this reason I doubt that many ordinary people will buy it. However, if it is read by the right people who knows, it might well make a difference.

Chris Forester

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"Copping it" on Wartime Roads

By Roy Ingleton

One aspect of life on which the Second World War had an immediate, significant and lasting effect was the traffic on the roads. Even before the declaration of war, the authorities had prepared plans for the requisition of vehicles suitable for military or other essential use. Although the actual requisition was the job of an Impressment Officer, the police were required to attend whenever a vehicle was to be requisitioned to ensure that there was no breach of the peace occasioned by irate vehicle owners.

This aspect had only a limited effect, however, and the first real change was the introduction of petrol rationing almost as soon as the war started. Petrol reserved for essential commercial use was dyed red, although it was an open secret that the dye could be removed by pouring the petrol through the filter of a gas mask (although it is not clear what effect this had on the efficacy of the respirator). All car owners were given a basic ration, sufficient for around 100 miles a month, supplemented where they could show that they had a genuine and essential need for additional supplies. Petrol hoarding was banned but, despite the very real dangers, was widely practised by storing supplies in all sorts of unsuitable containers, including bath tubs and kitchen coppers.

The careful conservation of precious petrol meant that cars were used only where necessary and that all the seats were filled if this proved practicable. Gradually, however, reduced rations and the scarcity of tyres and spare parts meant that many a cherished motor car was soon lovingly tucked away in its garage for the duration, propped on bricks or wood blocks to preserve the tyres. The final blow came in March, 1942 when the basic petrol ration was completely suspended. Apart from buses (working reduced schedules and often stopping completely before 10 pm), taxis (restricted to a distance of five miles from the borough boundary in many towns) and a few commercial vehicles, the military now had the roads to themselves, which was perhaps just as well as the standard of driving of some of these ill-trained service drivers left much to be desired. The suspension of the driving test also meant that the few new civilian drivers were often equally incompetent. The reduced number of buses available meant that a fairer system of boarding than the pre-war free-for-all had to be devised and queuing became mandatory – another wartime measure which has found a permanent place in our lifestyles.

When the air raids on London first started all traffic came to a halt while the drivers and passengers sought shelter but this quickly proved impracticable as it hindered the movement of essential vehicles. Buses would therefore travel more or less normally although this had its dangers as is shown by an incident at Palmers Green where a bus was caught in the blast of two bombs at the same time and the crew and 47 passengers all perished.

With the ending of the basic petrol ration, any driver could be stopped by the police and required to prove that his journey was essential and that he was travelling by the shortest possible route. One businessman who deviated from his set route for about three-quarters of a mile to go home for lunch was convicted of a breach of this regulation.

The actor-composer, Ivor Novello was also unfortunate and spent four weeks in jail for travelling between the London theatre which was staging his musical comedy, The Dancing Years, and his home in Berkshire. A farmer in Wales managed to circumvent the

regulations by using the fuel allocated for his trucks and tractors and, to fend off any awkward questions, kept a piece of work for the blacksmith permanently in his car, the smithy being next door to the pub. In many areas horses and horse-drawn vehicles, already obsolescent, experienced a sudden revival and it was not uncommon in some places to see the country doctor making his rounds on a sturdy hunter, a sight not seen for a generation.

One doctor even managed to persuade the Inland Revenue to agree a tax allowance of £90 a year for the keep of his horse.

Immediately prior to the war there were around two million private cars and 400,000 motorcycles on the road. There were still nearly a million and a half cars a year later but, after the suspension of the basic ration, the number dropped to some 700,000 rapidly ageing and deteriorating cars and around 125,000 motorcycles. With the invasion scare at its height, the police in the coastal areas were ordered to immobilise all vehicles in the area in the event of a landing by the enemy – if necessary by permanent, drastic steps.

The lack of transport, both private and public, placed a severe strain on those working odd hours, which included most of the civil defence services as well as the police. One special constable in Yorkshire remembers how he had to walk home, a distance of over three miles, carrying a steel helmet, gas mask, handcuffs, truncheon and a heavy overcoat after performing a full shift of police work. Bicycles, already a popular means of transport for the working classes, gained an unprecedented popularity, although this form of locomotion also suffered from a lack of spare parts and tyres. Batteries for lamps, too, were in short supply and often meant that the trusty Raleigh or BSA had to be left at home at night, just when it was most needed.

The Blackout

The next, far-reaching effect which the war had on road traffic was the introduction of the blackout. Arduous and dangerous for the pedestrian, the blackout was a nightmare for the motorist. Originally all street lighting was extinguished and, although sharp corners, kerbs, steps and car running boards and mudguards had been edged in white and tree trunks encircled by three painted white rings, people still collided with them or fell over them or were knocked down by them. Motorists were instructed that only heavily masked sidelights were allowed to be shown; red rear lights were permitted but the number plate light had to be blanked off or removed. Those who were driving in unfamiliar towns were at an added disadvantage, as A.G. Street wrote concerning a visit he made to Birmingham in November, 1939: 'I saw my intended hotel quite close three times, but could not manage to get my car to its front door. After half-an-hour's vain driving, I cast myself on to the bosom of a stalwart policeman, admitting that I was just one poor silly chump from the south. He cheered me a trifle by telling me that I was not the only one, and gave me foolproof directions which I was able to follow to a successful conclusion. I later learned the classic story of one poor motorist who drove helplessly around and around a square in Birmingham until King Edward the Seventh leaned down from his pedestal and said, "Do you mind asking a policeman how to get out of this? You are making my mother on the other side of the square quite giddy".'[1]

The police had still to try to control the traffic, now driven by virtually blind motorists and various ingenious solutions were proffered to make the constable on point duty visible to drivers. In Brighton, experiments were carried out with a coat and helmet treated with a special paint. The rays from two ultra-violet lights were played on him and it is reported that he was perfectly visible to motorists but 'invisible to raiding airmen'. In Salford, the police invented an aluminium device which fitted onto the top of a normal police helmet, with the word 'POLICE' in large letters. A battery in the officer's pocket provided the power to illuminate the sign at night, while the constable held a torch with red and green filters to direct the traffic. This somewhat Heath-Robinson affair does not appear to have caught on!

By January 1940, one person in five had had some sort of blackout-related accident and Winston Churchill took time off from directing the Admiralty to suggest that some modified form of lighting would save lives, alleviate depression and reduce crime.

As a result, very dim street lighting was restored at crossroads and other danger spots and motorists were permitted to use the offside headlamp provided it was fitted with the official pattern mask, which has been described as similar to a black cocoa tin with three shielded slits cut in the end. Traffic lights were all masked and the police often switched them off altogether during the blackout hours, leaving the few motorists on the roads to sort themselves out as best they could. Despite these difficulties, some motorists doused even these inadequate lights during a 'red' alert, resulting in at least one fatal accident.

The poor lighting imposed a great strain on drivers, especially those working long hours in the dark, such as bus drivers. It was not uncommon for a bus to leave the road entirely and end up in a field. On one such occasion, the traffic policeman called to attend the scene did not endear himself to the driver by asking if he had thought of volunteering for the Tank Corps. In a number of cities the trams and trolleybuses, scheduled for replacement by petrol-engined buses, were given a reprieve, although the silent approach of the latter was an additional hazard in the blackout.

Speed was restricted to 20 mph after dark as a result of the dramatic increase in road accidents (but proved very difficult to enforce).

Although the actual number of accidents which occurred during the early war years was fewer than pre-war, the consequences were much more deadly. In 1939/40 there were 8,400 road deaths, many of which occurred during the blackout while in 1940/41 the number rose to over 10,000. It is estimated that for every two persons killed through enemy action, one was killed on the roads. The *Police Review* quotes 926 fatal accidents in November 1939 (313 more than the same month the previous year), mostly pedestrians and mainly because of the blackout.

However, the general introduction of the white line painted down the centre of the carriageway, previously an exception, was a boon and one which endured after the war had ended.

The number of accidents meant that the new War Reserve constables had to learn very quickly how to deal with such incidents, often under extremely trying circumstances. For one such officer, one of his first accidents was nearly his last. While taking the particulars of two vehicles involved in an accident in the blackout,

neither showing lights on police instructions, he was so engrossed in his job that he didn't hear or ignored the sound of a falling bomb until a nearby Home Guard, a veteran of the Great War, grabbed him and pulled him into the ditch.

The speed limit and blackout did not always stop reckless driving as Police War Reserve Constable Norman Buchanan found. On motor patrol duty near Gravesend, Kent, he was instructed to watch out for and stop a Wolseley car travelling at high speed along the A2 road from London. The vehicle was easy to spot because of the distinctive illuminated Wolseley badge on the radiator but the driver refused to obey his signal to stop and sped on, eventually crashing in Rochester. The driver, who was killed in the crash, was no thief or 'joy-rider' but simply a young serviceman late back from leave.

The Yanks are Coming

Perhaps the biggest traffic problems came with the arrival of the American troops in 1942. Many lacked real driving skills and the practice of driving on the left-hand side of the road was completely alien to them. Norman Longmate[2] describes how one young Cambridge girl's first sight of a GI was nearly her last. Approaching her car as she drove along the Newmarket road came 'the biggest truck, driven by the biggest black man' she had ever seen, roaring straight towards her on the wrong side of the road. Since he had obviously not learned the English rule of the road, she prudently forgot it herself and nipped to the other side of the road and a collision was averted.

There are many tales told about these visitors from 'across the Pond', their large trucks and ubiquitous Jeeps and one lasting impression of them seems to have been their love of speed. Norman Longmate[3] goes on to describe one Hampshire woman's experience: 'They would drive up to my HQ at full steam only to brake at the entrance in a cloud of dust and a scream of tyres and, before the engine's flywheel had ceased revolving, the dispatch rider would be halfway up the steps of the building to deliver what would, as likely as not, be of minor importance and seldom urgent.

Spies and Thieves

In view of the danger of vehicles being used by unauthorised persons, such as spies and invading Germans, the Motor Vehicles (Control) Order, 1940, required motorists to immobilise their vehicles. The first safeguard was to close all windows, remove the ignition key and lock the doors. Although there was little point in locking the doors of an open-topped car, some policemen insisted on this being done. In fact, so poor were the locking devices on cars of that era that a short length of tubing or even, in some cases, a strong wrist, was sufficient to force the handle to open the car. To compensate for this, drivers were required to further immobilise their vehicles by removing part of the mechanism – usually the rotor arm or the HT lead to the distributor. The instructions issued to the Metropolitan Police were that, if an insecure vehicle was discovered, they were to try to locate the owner, leaving the vehicle in charge of another officer, and to use any reasonable means to prevent the vehicle from being driven away or else remove it to a police station. Officers were not to interfere with the mechanism unless no other means were available. Under normal circumstances, no police officer should resort to 'extreme measures' without the aid of a skilled police mechanic. These 'extreme measures' did not extend to the deflating of tyres – a fairly common practice in some parts and, as anyone who has had to inflate four tyres from dead flat using just an inefficient hand pump will appreciate, was an salutary deterrent.

For anyone who had already taken adequate steps to immobilise his vehicle, this was highly annoying and it is recorded that one irate motorist actually managed to get the police to inflate his tyres for him after they had unjustly let them down in Holborn. The Dunlop tyre company issued a card which stated, 'This vehicle is immobilised, There is no need to deflate the tyres.' But the police did not always accept this assurance.

Eric St Johnston tells of how this Order had amusing but embarrassing consequences when, in November 1941, as Chief Constable of Oxfordshire, he attended a reception for General de Gaulle at Balliol college, in company with Charles Fox, the Chief Constable of Oxford City. On leaving they saw Lord Nuffield sitting at the wheel of the small Morris car he normally drove. He kept pressing the starter but to no avail and so the two policemen offered to help. 'Just give me a push, ' said the noble Lord, 'It will start in a moment'. And so the inhabitants of Oxford were treated to the rare sight of two chief constables, in full uniform, pushing the leading British car manufacturer in a small family saloon along the Broad – all to no avail. Suddenly Lord Nuffield slammed on the brakes and called out to the perspiring policemen, 'Oh, I remember now; it's all your fault. You told us to immobilise our cars so I've fitted a secret switch', and pressing a switch underneath his seat, he started the car and drove away with a wave of his hand.

Other embarrassing situations resulted from a lack of mechanical knowledge or simply a lack of commonsense. The history of the Oldham Borough Police[4] records an incident in which a special constable, on patrol in the town centre, noticed an unusually large number of cars near the town's principal hotel, where a party was evidently in progress. He began to check these vehicles to ensure that they had been properly immobilised and, as it turned out, many of the guests had completely overlooked this requirement. So the constable methodically went about removing the rotor arms.

One by one the small items of equipment were removed from the car engines and dropped into the constable's pockets. Then he took the lot back to police headquarters and left them there to be collected by the owners. The party at the hotel ended at midnight. Those guests who had forgotten to remove the rotor arms from their cars struggled for some time to get their vehicles started before learning that they would have to collect the missing items from police headquarters. Unfortunately, the rotor arms had not been marked with any means of identification by the special constable, and it was some considerable time before the last guest could begin his weary journey home. And one guest, unaware of the special constable's diligent attention to duty, pushed his car past the police station and the full length of the High Street before discovering he had no rotor arm in the vehicle.

In 1940, with the invasion scare at its height, Sir Will Spens, the Regional Commissioner for East Anglia, issued an order that no private car might use any road

within five miles of the main coastal towns unless they held a special permit. Cars without a permit had either to be removed from the area altogether or effectively immobilised. In the latter case, parts removed from vehicles had to be handed over to the police to be delivered to a special store in Bedford for safe keeping. Spens further ordered that all small craft had to be immobilised. They were taken from the water and removed to a safe distance inland. A night-time curfew was imposed within a five-mile wide coastal strip from one end of the Region to the other. Towns and villages were excluded, as was traffic on A and B class roads.

The Roads to Nowhere

Travel was rendered even more perilous by the requirement under the Removal of Direction Signs Order, 1940, to uproot or obliterate all signposts, milestones and place names from the roadsides in order to confuse the enemy. Whether or not this would have had the intended effect of creating confusion among the German invaders or parachutists is not known, but it certainly had that effect on native travellers, once they left familiar surroundings. It is never amusing to lose one's way and when this is coupled with a serious lack of fuel, the results can be, and often were, disastrous. The public were advised not to respond to any enquiries for directions or to tell anyone where they were. Correspondence in *The Times* raised the question what one should do if asked the way by a motorist, the suggested answer being to ask the motorist for his identity card. This ignored, however, the fact that people had been warned never to show their identity card to unauthorised persons.

Ralph Ingersoll gives a very illuminating description of this phenomenon as it affected a non-British visitor: '[Our trip] was half-way over before we noticed the most characteristic thing of all: the complete absence of clues as to where we were. At the crossroads there are no signposts whatever, but this is only the beginning. In each town wherever, on a sign or the glass window of a store front, the name of the town or the county might have been revealed it was carefully painted out. Even the commercial vans on the road had addresses and telephone numbers conspicuously painted out. England's roads are complicated things. Later, even when I was driving with officers who had grown up in the country, we were continually getting lost or stopping every little while to ask directions of a passer-by. I always found that directions were cheerfully given but I was told this cooperation was simply evidence that the September invasion scare had passed.'[5]

There is some indication that the removal of place names did cause a degree of confusion to the enemy. A report from a Nazi agent working on the south coast referred to 'the area Tunbridge Wells to Beachy Head'. The Abwehr made a note on this report to the effect that '... Tunbridge, which lies on the railway line from Hastings to London, must, according to the sense of the report, also lie on the coast'. But, in fact, both Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells lie some thirty miles from the coast and it is possible that the agent was confused by the fact that the owner of the post office and general stores in Camber (on the coast near to Hastings) was named Tunbridge and the sign over his shop read 'TUNBRIDGE – POST OFFICE AND STORES', the name of the village beneath this being deleted.

The drivers of military vehicles found a number of ways to circumvent this problem. One was to look at the manhole covers in the roadway which often bore the name of the nearest town. Telephone kiosks also had their uses as no one had thought to remove the label giving the location of the kiosk for emergency use.

Enemy action only added to the problems of those travelling on the roads and railways of Britain. Craters big enough to hold a double-decker bus appeared in some roads and the debris from bombed buildings formed an impenetrable barrier across road and rail. Not all road users appreciated the problems facing the police and transport undertakings. On Tuesday, 13 May, 1941, one of the London dailies published an article headed 'BLITZ TRAFFIC CHAOS – WHY?' A reporter, who had presumably spent a fairly comfortable night in some outer suburb complained bitterly that, on the Monday, his car had been diverted several times and that 'complete routes from one side of London to the other were never clearly defined'.

'Who,' he asked, 'was responsible for this muddle? Little had been done. Speedy transport is the life-blood of London' – and a good deal more to the same effect. To those who had been in the middle of it; to those who had looked out over London in the early hours after the heavy raid of Saturday/Sunday 10/11 May and had seen major fires in all directions, too many to count, burning fiercely; to the police and wardens; to the fire service and demolition parties who had toiled through the Saturday night, all day Sunday and all through the Sunday night, this was a bit too much.[6] In fact, on the Sunday morning all the bridges over the Thames were closed for some reason or another – hoses, fires, dangerous structures, unexploded bombs, etc. No traffic had been able to move in the City at all and several vital traffic junctions, like the Elephant and Castle and Gardiner's Corner had been impassable. All Southern Railway terminii had been closed.

Routes and Diversions

For the police, one of the major responsibilities during and after a raid was the devising and signing alternative routes. This was difficult where there was extensive damage; a route might be usable for a few hundred yards, or a mile or so but would be no good to a person wanting to get right through. It was obviously impossible to indicate the necessary information on hundreds of diversion boards and, in retrospect, it is remarkable how quickly traffic was got moving again after some of the heavy raids. Much of the credit must go to the indefatigable police motorcyclists who sallied forth in the small hours to plan routes around obstructions and danger points. Close to the more devastated areas the police would set up interrogation lay-bays to which they could direct doubtful vehicles while they checked on their business, without interrupting the flow of legitimate traffic.

Is Your Journey Necessary?

London was, of course, not the only city to be brought to a near standstill by enemy action, nor was it simply a question of ordinary workers going about their normal business. Some Coventry 'trekkers' were so desperate to leave town, that one Morris Minor van is reported to have hit an unlit bomb crater at speed. Its front wheels went into the crater and the car turned a complete somersault, landing on all four wheels on the other side.

The occupants were merely dazed and soon recovered sufficiently to resume their hasty flight. Meanwhile, others were trying to get in but such was the ferocity of some raids that even emergency vehicles were unable to get through. An auxiliary fireman from Birmingham was one of many firefighters who were sent to Coventry during the devastating raids on that city:

As we approached Coventry at speed I noticed people waving us down. This I ignored as often on our way to a fire we had been stopped by someone whose garden shed was on fire. But the nearer we got the more urgent the waves got. I eventually stopped behind another vehicle and was approached by a policeman ... He cried as he said, 'You may as well go back, mate, you can't get in.' We stayed until 2 am and like the others we then returned home. No one spoke and I think someone was sick.[7]

It was, of course, a primary police task under these circumstances to try to prevent non-essential vehicles from travelling in the raided areas. This meant stopping everything which was not obviously an emergency vehicle and turning back any which had no urgent business in the area. Naturally, this did not always please those who were on legitimate business but were not obviously so, like the airman who was engaged in conveying operational messages around the district. He found himself being repeatedly stopped by policemen with red torches, although he was invariably waved on once the officer saw that he was an airman and in an official car. Nevertheless, his patience began to wear thin and, when he was stopped for the sixth time, he drew his service revolver and waved it at the policeman who rapidly signalled him to carry on.

'So I said, "I'll flash my light the next time so get out of my way, I'm in a bloody hurry," Needless to say I was not stopped again.'[8]

No doubt the policeman was left reflecting on the utter bloody-mindedness of people who consider that they and/or their mission transcends everything else and places them above ordinary mortals and, had he not got his hands full with much more vital matters, would undoubtedly have conveyed this to the impatient and self-important airman.

As the war progressed and the Second Front became imminent, the whole of Britain became akin to a huge military camp. Troops and their equipment were on the move from one end of the country to another, especially towards the marshalling areas in the south of the country. Military vehicles, driven by soldiers strange to the area, often not even British since much of the invasion force was to consist of Americans, needed guidance and this task, like so many others, fell on the police. One such was Constable Tom Longhurst of Kent who, on an ex-WD Indian motorcycle, spent every night for several weeks escorting convoys along the A2 road, from Faversham, where he relieved another police escort, to Rainham, where he in turn handed his charges over to an officer from the next division. As soon as one convoy was duly handed over, the escorts returned to their starting point to meet the next one.

On one occasion Tom was wending his way back to Faversham to meet his next clutch of 'chicks' when he came upon the convoy parked beside the road, taking up much of the opposite carriageway. As he approached these vehicles, another lorry came towards him at high speed, without lights and on the wrong side of the road, forcing him off the road. Cursing the reckless driver roundly and comprehensively, Tom Longhust remounted his machine and led the waiting convoy westwards towards Rainham. On the way they came across another convoy, stationary at the side of the road, with a great deal of bustle and activity in evidence. On stopping to see what had occurred, he found that the same rogue lorry had run down and killed a Canadian soldier who was crossing the road to relieve himself in the bushes at the side of the road. The lorry made no attempt to stop and was never traced.

Another constable engaged on similar duties was Geoffrey Taylor of the Metropolitan Police. One of his duties was to help escort the daily military convoys through the East End of London on a motor cycle, usually riding well ahead to warn oncoming traffic or holding up vehicles at crossroads and other junctions or danger spots.

He and his colleagues would leapfrog up and down the convoy, changing places from front to rear and back again so that the convoy could maintain the regulation speed of 15 mph. This speed limit would be ignored when the escorted lorry contained unexploded bombs or mines and the sight of a military vehicle flying a red flag and escorted by two police 'speed-cops', all travelling at high speed, was enough to ensure that all other traffic kept well clear. Often the police motorcyclists would be aided by military dispatch riders or MPs in their task of keeping the convoy together. Some of the drivers were ATS girls with very little experience and it is all credit to them that they managed as well as they did, especially in the dark. Philip Chignell, who kept a comprehensive diary at this time, quotes in his entry for 9 December, 1941: 'One fatal casualty so far ... our own army lorries have knocked down more lamp posts. You just knock one down, look round and laugh and drive on. Later a policeman comes along and stands by the fallen post, chivvying choirboys and the like away until two men come along with spades and a barrow. The post is removed ... one man remains behind to fill up the hole where the post stood ...'[9].

So far as the police themselves were concerned, motor vehicles were still something of a novelty in the 1930s. In Oxfordshire there were no traffic patrol cars – the only vehicles the force possessed were six Hillman Minx cars, one for each division and one for use by Headquarters personnel. Lancashire were experimenting with 'courtesy cops' in an effort to reduce the tremendous slaughter on the roads and to enforce the provisions of the 1930 Road Traffic Act. Certain other forces had taken similar, tentative steps towards mechanisation, especially those county forces which had a trunk road running through their area. Several forces set up a small Traffic Division or Mobile Section; in the East Riding of Yorkshire for example, there was a Traffic Patrol car located at each main police station – about 10 in all – which were used for all sorts of duties where a car was needed. By 1944 the Chief Constable was reported as seeking authority to purchase 17 patrol cars, by means of which he claimed 18 constables could do the work of 30 previously. He had not intended to implement this scheme until after the war was over but lack of manpower had forced his hand. By 1941, the Chief Constable of Northamptonshire was reported as proposing to introduce a 'courtesy' patrol scheme in order to improve the standard of road behaviour and to bring about a reduction in the number of accidents. He proposed that these vehicles, which would be clearly marked as police cars, should be crewed by uniformed

members of the Women's Auxiliary Police Corps, accompanied by a police officer as observer.

Speeding Up The Fleet

In Kent, a Traffic Division was created in 1930 and equipped with one Rover saloon and 19 motorcycles at a total cost of just over £1,300. This 'fleet' was later supplemented by two open-topped MG sports cars, the drivers of which were much envied. Similar vehicles were used by other forces, such as West Sussex, even though these two-seaters with a soft-top and no boot were not very practical for police work. As the war progressed and regular policemen became thinner on the ground, these cherished cars were handed over to the War Reserves to use, much of whose work consisted of general dispatch runs and for ferrying prisoners (including prisoners of war) to the local prison for processing. Air raids proved an additional hazard to road users and War Reserve Constable Norman Buchanan was not very popular when he drove his smart new MG into a bomb crater which had suddenly appeared in the road he was travelling on near Gravesend.

A similar situation existed in Waltham Abbey (Metropolitan Police) where, on the outbreak of the war, the station was supplied with its first car, a Wolseley 14. Little thought had been given to the availability of drivers and only one sergeant and one constable held driving licences. The arrival of Police War Reserves eased matters since three of these were drivers and were able to share in the driving. Being unused to the luxury of a car, the supervisory staff at the station tended to use it for administrative purposes rather than patrol. At least it saved the inspector from getting wet when he wanted to visit his constables on the beat.

Although many city and borough forces lacked any kind of motor vehicle, a few (Bradford, Sheffield, etc.) used some small cars for patrol work, often the ubiquitous Morris 8 tourer.

The Ladies Arrive

The most novel aspect was the use of females to drive police cars – an unheard of state of affairs in most forces – but the introduction of the WAPC and the increase in the number of police-women meant that the force had a completely new source of possible drivers to add to the War Reserves. WAPC Darlington was one sworn auxiliary who was detailed for motor patrol duties in Stafford. She tells how 'all the ladies who could drive' (about a dozen in all) were allocated this type of work, enforcing speed limits and escorting the many abnormally wide loads.

During the war, production of civilian cars was extremely limited and the whole output was earmarked for the police and other essential services. Such vehicles as found their way into police garages were, understandably, carefully nurtured and the drivers were expected to cherish them. Constable Bill Cavey and his partner in the Metropolitan Police were among those lucky officers who had the use of a brand new patrol car, in their case a large Ford V8 complete with bell and public address equipment and just 15 miles on the 'clock'. One day, with an additional observer in the back, they were hurrying to an incident when the car hit a poorly-filled trench which had been excavated by one of the public utilities. The excellent springing of this quality car took the shock but, when the Bill Cavey in the front passenger seat turned to speak to the observer in the back, he found he was lying unconscious, having struck his head on the ash roof bar to which the roof lining was attached. Luckily, he soon recovered with nothing worse than a headache.

Over-enthusiastic drivers were not the only hazard which faced police vehicles.

On a particularly nasty night a van was sent out to do a job which should have taken only a short time. The hours went by but the van did not return and no one had seen it. At last, after about three hours, the driver walked into the office, saluted smartly and handed in a small piece of paper. It was the revenue licence. 'All that's left of the van, Sergeant.' He explained that he had left the van for a short time and on return had found only a large hole – no sign of the van except the revenue licence fluttering gently amongst the rubble[10].

An Enormous Area to Cover

The lack of experienced officers through call-up meant that it often became necessary to group two or even more rural beats together and make them the responsibility of just one constable. In the East Riding of Yorkshire this meant that each constable had an enormous area to cover and, to enable him to get around his greatly enlarged 'patch', the force's Traffic Sergeant was sent all over the country accompanied by a Ministry of Transport agent, to locate and buy some small, secondhand cars for their use. He managed to find a dozen suitable cars and then had to teach the rural men to drive – not an easy task as few of them were motor-minded.

As time went on, the availability of vehicles for police purposes was restricted more by the lack of petrol, oil and tyres than by a lack of vehicles themselves. Mileage had to be kept to a minimum and, in the Metropolitan Police, the total mileage covered during each of the war years was about half that covered in 1939. In common with the rest of the working classes, bicycles were the principal means of transport for most policemen, both to get to and from work and also, where the beat was designated a 'cycle beat', to cover his designated area.

Although some WAPCs were lucky enough to be allocated to motor patrol duties, others were not so fortunate, as Agnes Cook discovered: 'Cupar was a farming town with a market every Tuesday when the farmers brought their goods to market to sell and exchange. I remember one day trying to cycle to my digs through a flock of sheep. My greatcoat caught in the bike chain and down I went amongst the sheep who couldn't have cared less and just milled around while I tried to rescue what was left of my dignity. Since it was a small town everyone knew everyone else and the story of my "downfall" reached my landlady before I got home'[11].

Even the US 'Army of Occupation' took to this novel (for them) means of locomotion which was ideal for getting around on the vast airfields used by their B17 Flying Fortresses. Although many had never ridden a bicycle before and looked upon them more as toys, the roads of East Anglia were quickly filled with gum-chewing, cigar-smoking figures in khaki drab, usually riding on the wrong side of the road. To the local policeman the sight of a group of these extrovert young men acting as an unofficial trick-cycling team in the main street of his village was a problem he had never encountered before and made another addition to his repertoire of 'war duties.'

It was normal for a rural constable to rely entirely on his trusty bicycle and there was very little likelihood of

any motorised assistance from the neighbouring town section. Even quite remote places had to be visited by bicycle; one constable told his superior that a certain large house on his beat was *'A good ten minutes walk on a bike!"*

Questioned as to this curious assessment it transpired that, in fact, the house in question was on a steep hill up which no one in their right minds would try to ride a heavy, single-geared police bicycle so it was indeed 'ten minutes walk' (with a bike).

With the declaration of war and the anticipated explosion in police duties related to civil defence and general war matters, some positive steps had to be taken to improve the mechanisation of the police but this took a long while to filter down to the man on the country beat. Constable Leslie Taylor claimed to have clocked up over 7,000 miles on his bicycle every year patrolling his rural beat on the North Downs, a feat made all the harder because of the lack of new tyres and inner tubes. His colleague, PC Bert Ayers on the Romney Marsh had more luck in that his chief constable gave him permission to buy and use his own motor cycle, for which a petrol allowance would be given. As most of the best machines had been requisitioned for the Armed Forces, the best he could do was a rather ancient BSA Gold Star which he later traded in for a better Matchless machine. Another colleague, Tom Longhurst, was perhaps luckier in that he was issued with an ex-WD Indian, with hand-gearchange and a foot clutch which he used when escorting military convoys in the later stages of the war.

Further north, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, motorcycles were also to the fore and one constable surprised his colleagues by arriving at the police station with a German airman riding on the pillion of his Norton. He had scoured some 100 square miles of desolate countryside, looking for the crew of a downed Luftwaffe plane, one of a number which had been raiding the Avro works in Yeadon, where the Halifax bombers were being made. On locating the hapless German, the constable disarmed him and gallantly offered him a lift to captivity – an offer the airman could not refuse!

Leslie Clarke, who was stationed in an Essex village, was another motorcycle owner. One night considerable damage was caused to property in the village by enemy action and all the telephones were put out of order. Having to make a report to his Divisional Headquarters three miles away, he set off on his motorcycle.

"On arrival, I found the place in darkness and several lads coming out from under tables. They had also had bombs in the vicinity and all telephones were down. I was told to take a report to the County Headquarters at Chelmsford, about 15 miles away. I was nearly out of petrol and told the Super I needed some to make the journey. He nearly blew his nut, suggesting that I was taking advantage of an air raid to get force petrol. I made the journey but I cannot say I enjoyed it, driving in the dark with a mask on the headlight, giving me only a few feet of vision in front".[12]

With the lack of fuel and tyres for cars, motorcycles became the most common form of official police transport throughout the whole of the war and performed great service in escorting convoys, abnormal loads and general message delivery duties. Dennis Vorley was a constable in West Sussex during the early war years (before volunteering for flying duties with the RAF) and considered himself fortunate to be chosen for Mobile duties, using a Triumph Speed Twin motor cycle, His main task was to stand by at the police station and, after a raid, sally forth to find out where the bombs had dropped and report back the location, damage and casualties. Since the machines were not equipped with radio, this had to be done in person or by telephone.

When those on foot patrol needed to get to another part of their beat in a hurry, their usual means of transport was a bus or tram. They were expected to pay their fare and it was a disciplinary offence not to do so, but few conductors asked for the money; they knew they would be only too pleased to have a policeman riding with them when they were operating a late night service. In some remote places it was common practice to hand official reports to the bus driver for delivery to the police station. In Harrogate, on court days, a tram made the rounds of the police stations, picking up prisoners and conveying them to the court house as there was no alternative means of transport. During the Blitz, policemen were happy to use any form of transport they could. Sergeant Grey was working on the Isle of Dogs but lived across the River Thames and, during the worst of the London Blitz experienced great difficulty in getting to his home. His usual route was through the Greenwich Tunnel but this was flooded and, with others, he tried to get a lift on the Thames Police launch. At first the skipper refused to take them but later relented and, laden to the gunwales with policemen and their bicycles, the launch set off across the river. The reason for the skipper's reluctance soon became apparent:

The river was alive with hazards, the tide was driving London-wards, carrying anything that would float with it; huge 5 ton rolls of newsprint, rafts of 12 x 4 timbers from riverside timber wharves, crates, boxes, flotsam, junk, oil drums, jars and wicker work. The river stank to high heaven.[13]

Whatever means of transport was available, police work had to go on. And so it did, for the duration of the War and set the pattern for the post-war, highly mechanized police service we know today.

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Roy Ingleton is the author of 'The Gentlemen at War – Policing Britain, 1939-45'.

A Compleate Historie of Ye Police?

By Peter Rowe

Is there a need for a single authoritative volume on The History of the British Police? One that perhaps draws together the best of existing histories and includes aspects previously ignored?

Somewhere, amongst the various histories of the police service, may lie the basic requirements. Major Arthur Griffith's *Mysteries of Police and Crime*, for example, published over a century ago was not intended as a definitive history. Rather it was intended as a popular, readable set of volumes on crime, criminals and the work of selected forces both at home and abroad. It takes us from the 17th century to the 1890s. Major Griffiths was a senior government official. At one stage he was an Inspector of Prisons and his postings put him in close contact with senior police officers and government officials of the time. As a result some of his observations were based on conversations and personal friendships making them possibly less than objective: The many illustrations add a good deal to our visual understanding of the times. While much of what is written is part of the history of individual forces, by implication, Griffiths is also describing issues which faced the service as a whole. To that extent there is an element of service history within its three volumes.

There are, however, two more recent works which set out intentionally to chart the development of the Police Service.

Critchley and Rawlings

Critchley's *A History of Police in England and Wales 900-1966* is a single, unillustrated volume of 360 pages dealing with events from AD900 and taking the reader, in the revised version, up to the 1970s. The approach is factual and objective. Mr Critchley writes in a style to be anticipated from one who was a senior civil servant holding principal private secretary office, who was Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Police 1960-62 and a senior member of the Police Department of the Home Office until 1971. He was, therefore, in a unique position to draw upon much previously unpublished material from Home Office archives. Essentially, his work is about the development of the Police Service as a whole and he touches upon individual 'force' histories only to the extent necessary as background to a particular issue.

Rawlings's *A Short History of Policing* is an unillustrated work of 274 pages. He begins by accusing Critchley of having sped through the period 900 to 1829 in 57 pages while spending 265 pages on the next 137 years. Rawlings himself gets from AD600 to 1829 in a little over 110 pages and from 1829 to the late 1900s in another hundred. How many pages is not, of course, the main issue. The length of a published work owes something to both font size and the extent to which the writer is succinct. Mr Rawlings, a university lecturer in law, chose to move away from what he considered was an undue focus on 1829 as being the advent of the Police Service. He considered 1829 as a point in time which had preoccupied police historians for too long and cited a rich history of policing (that is, how communities sought to maintain order) from a much earlier period. That said, he tends not to disagree with what Critchley actually says. Essentially he adopts a different, almost sociological, approach and examines the same issues from alternative viewpoints.

Putting both together we have a history covering 1,400 years of 'police' or 'policing', as Rawlings prefers to call it. Rawlings gives an insight into the 300 years before Critchley's starting point and continues for a quarter of a century longer to bring us up to date. So, one might argue, we already have two excellent works on the history of police, policing and its origins.

A missing ingredient?

But is what these authors produce, in combination, a 'compleate historie'. Is there perhaps a missing ingredient? Alongside the combined approaches of the senior civil servant and the senior lecturer in law, is there room for contributions on policing from the inside – by a serving or former police officers?

Again, the issue is whose 'police' viewpoint would be relevant. Would the writings of an officer who has spent most of his time in uniform 'at the sharp end' of policing, differ markedly from the views of a senior officer who was fast-tracked to high rank but gained a great deal of experience in high office? Similarly, how much would the approach differ if the writer's experience was mainly as a uniformed officer or, alternatively, as a detective? Importantly, their views would give an insight into whether so-called 'advances' and 'developments' really worked – Unit Beat Police for example?

A writer, of whatever rank, who retired in the 1980s could, no doubt, write knowledgeably on the period 1950 to 1980. It is unlikely that they could write with the same authority on the period 1980 to the present day. However one attempts to remain abreast of legislation, procedures and police 'news' there is inevitably an air of the dinosaur about the long-retired officer. This hinders a fully objective and analytical approach when considering more modern developments.

The point is that a police history, without a 'police' input is likely to result in a work that is high on theory and low on practicalities.

'Specialist' histories

There is, of course, no shortage of works on specialist aspects of the history of policing such as fingerprinting, criminal investigation and forensic science However, a most valuable recent work is 'specialist' in a different way, in that it goes to the roots of police organisation and development over the past two centuries. *The British Police – Police Forces and Chief Officers* is mainly concerned with the period 1829 to 2000. Within its pages can be found salient landmarks in the history of individual forces. These enable the reader to trace the emergence of tiny urban forces (say Windsor in 1836) through amalgamation with a surrounding area

(Berkshire in 1947) to its present organisational status as a small cog in a giant wheel (Thames Valley since 1968). Similarly it is possible to trace the reluctant formation of county forces (say North Riding in 1856 led by five long-serving Chief Officers in a little over a century to its final amalgamation (to York and North East Yorkshire in 1968). Of course the little county suffered a further indignity by being further divided up amongst others in 1974 – as if to punish it for its earlier tardiness!

The relevance of force histories

In our search for a complete history is there anything to learn from existing works covering the history of individual police forces? To an extent they contain a great deal which is relevant. The Victorian forces were very much part of local government and politics. The influence of the early inspectorate had a military feel to it and concerned itself primarily with whether particular forces were serving their area well enough to merit continuation of their government grant. This was an issue not subject to recognisable yardsticks. A dissenting inspector rarely took an opposing view, stirring up a hornets' nest, by recommending that the grant be withdrawn.

In practice, for the first century, inspections were frequently little more than a very pleasant day out inspecting row upon row of officers, checking the occasional pocket book and dining well with the chief officer and police authority.

In the main, individual force histories are written by serving or former officers of the force concerned. How complete a particular history emerges depends upon what the writer chose to include (there may even have been a publisher with firm ideas), the amount of time available for research and the amount of archive material available. But there is value for the national picture from these local snapshots in time. Indeed some local events sparked off a change in legislation and even a Royal Commission.

Do we need a 'compleate historie'?

So is there a need for a single 'complete' history drawing together, and expanding on, existing works? If so who would be in the best position to tackle such a mammoth task? For an individual to take on the task they would need an abundance of time, a location near to good archive material and a publisher prepared to support a venture lacking the desired commercial potential. Finally, since the making of history is continuous, they would need to make provision for the issue of regular supplements to update the work. Maybe the practical solution would be for the matter to be in the hands of an academic institution as an ongoing project.

Enter the website

Or does the answer to a complete history lie in modern technology, available to all, easy and cheap to access? It should not be too difficult to select the salient points (whatever they are considered to be) and place them in their chronological context on a website. Links could be included to point the researcher to more thorough examination of particular topics and an extensive bibliography provided. One could argue that, although there is no comprehensive website as yet, there is an extensive bibliography available on line. This is accessible on www.centrex.police.uk. Readers of more mature years may like to be reminded that Centrex is the overall body responsible for developing police excellence. This embraces, inter alia, previous police training establishments including the Police Staff College. The website includes the comprehensive 'Library Catalogue' at Bramshill.

If it ain't broke ...

Or is this all pie in the sky? Our country has fared quite satisfactorily (so far at least) without a formal written constitution, So does the history of police or policing as it at present exists, really need a 'compleate historie'? Perhaps the ideal situation is really what we have at present – a rich diversity of written materials that we can draw upon to obtain a balanced view of a wide range of police topics? Do we really need a 'Code Napoleon' of police history when all that is really needed is a regularly published and updated bibliography?

In 1979, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Metropolitan Police, the Librarian-Curator of the Police Staff College published a one-off bibliography on the Police of England and Wales. Although later editions have not been published the booklet is still of use today for the period up to 1979. We already have, then, the makings of such a bibliography. So do we really need a 'compleate historie'? Well, it would be nice to think that the 21st Century could produce something more up to date than we currently have.

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Peter Rowe served in the City of London Police from 1952 to 1979. He is the author of a website on the history of the City of London Police – the second edition of which can be accessed at: www.cityoflondonpolicehistory.info

He has also attempted a second website hoping to draw together the salient points in the history of the police service as a whole. Much easier said than done – and provoking the present contribution! The preliminary edition of the site is to be found at www.englishandwelshpolicehistory.co.uk

Book Reviews

The Real Sweeney

Tough, Funny, Fast-Paced Memoirs of a Life in the Sweeney and Serious Crime Squad

Dick Kirby

Foreword by Leonard 'Nipper' Read QPM, Published by Robinson, 24 March 2005

£7.99 paperback

The no-holds-barred memoirs of a London police detective from his pursuit of those who have 'gone across the pavement,' con-men, screwsmen and baffles with Old Bailey Judges. He lifts the lids on the realities of the flying squad; both its unsung heroes, the ineffective CPS and villains in uniform who gave the force a bad name. From his bruising first experience of giving evidence to securing Britain's first ever double-supergrass, Dick Kirby describes with a strong dose of humour the trials and tribulations of spending over half of his twenty-six years with the Serious Crime Squad and the Flying Squad.

Whether it's the Kings Cross job that became the worst kept secret in London, the case of the unhappy bigamist who burst into tears, Kirby tells things the only way he knows – no punches pulled. Not for him the flabby compromises shown to today's criminals – Kirby leads the reader straight into the underworld, meeting informants in often dangerous situations, gathering together intelligence and evidence before hitting the criminals hard. His tales of how life in the force used to be in the good old days are sometimes shocking, sometimes blackly funny, but always compelling.

Praise for the Author

'Those who haven't sampled the terrific true tales penned by this retired detective, are in for a page-turning experience to remember.' – Joseph Wambaugh, author of *The Choirboys*.

'Dick Kirby gives us a unique insight into the workings of the Flying Squad as it used to be.' – John O'Connor, former Flying Squad Commander.

Dick Kirby was described by a Judge at the Old Bailey as being, 'one of the best detectives at Scotland Yard', a senior officer in Belfast noted that he was 'a good man to have in an explosive situation'. Of the many criminals he arrested, he was commended by Commissioners, senior police officers, Directors of Public Prosecutions, Judges and Magistrates on 40 occasions for courage, leadership and detective ability and made more visits to hospitals and divisional surgeons than he cares to remember.

Constable & Robinson Ltd
www.constablerobinson.com

Truly a Great Victorian – a quiet man before whom rogues trembled

This book is a biography of Sir Edward Bradford, who was Commissioner at Scotland Yard from 1890-1903. The son of a clergyman, young Edward suffered from illness at school but was recruited into the cavalry of the East India Company and in 1854, at the age of 17, found himself as a member of the Madras Light Cavalry. He saw action in the Persian War and then experienced the troubled times of the Indian Mutiny, when he became a senior officer within Mayne's Horse, a cavalry regiment raised by Henry Otway Mayne, a distant cousin both of Sir Richard Mayne, the first Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, and of three Chief Constables (Dawson Mayne of Shropshire 1840-1859; Otway Mayne of Buckinghamshire 1896-1928, and Jasper Mayne of East Suffolk 1899-1933). The tiger hunt which cost Sir Edward his left arm is described in detail, as are some of his military exploits, and the 1887 shipwreck in which he lost his possessions during his return from India. Sir Edward was involved with the visit of the Prince of Wales to India in 1875-6 and some aspects of the court of Queen Victoria. He was a great character who rode his horse with the reins in his teeth, and was Commissioner when Edward Henry, who had also seen service in India, brought fingerprints to Scotland Yard.

One hundred and two pages long, this book was compiled and written by Mrs Constance Bradford who married Sir Edward's grandson, and donated Sir Edward's medals to the Metropolitan Police Museum. Mrs Bradford has done a great service by publishing this book from her own resources after experiencing great difficulty with commercial publishers. It is a unique family insight into a man who became Commissioner when life was far more adventurous than nowadays.

Copies of the book are available, priced £12, from Mrs C. Bradford, The Barns, Tapnell, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight PO41 0YJ. Cheques payable to C. Bradford.

Review by Alan Moss